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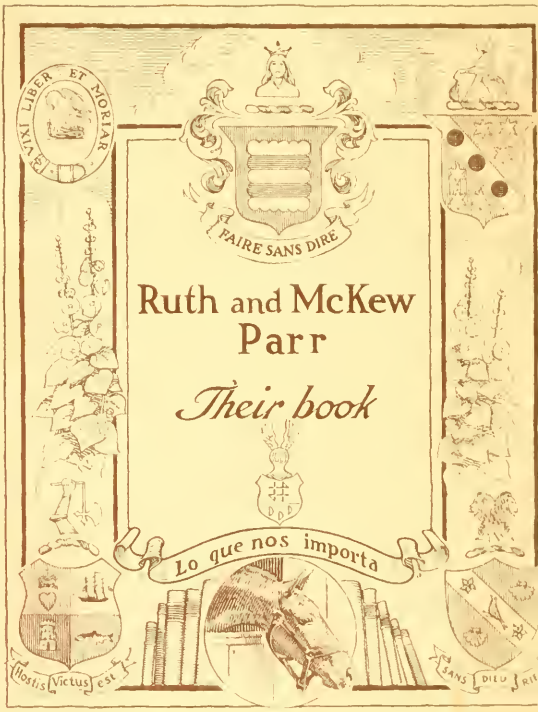

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MAGELLAN

and the AGE of DISCOVERY

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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

AND THE NEW WORLD OF HIS DISCOVERY

A NARRATIVE BY

FILSON YOUNG

WITH A NOTE ON THE NAVIGATION OF COLUMBUS'S FIRST VOYAGE BY THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN, K.P.

VOLUME I

SECOND EDITION

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TO

THE RIGHT HON. SIR HORACE PLUNKETT,

K.C.V.O., D.C.L., F.R.S.

MY DEAR HORACE,

Often while I have been studying the records of colonisation in the New World I have thought of you and your difficult work in Ireland; and I have said to myself, "What a time he would have had if he had been Viceroy of the Indies in 1493!" There, if ever, was the chance for a Department such as yours; and there, if anywhere, was the place for the Economic Man. Alas! there was only one of him; William Ires or Eyre by name, from the county Galway; and though he fertilised the soil he did it with his blood and bones. A wonderful chance; and yet you see what came of it all. It would perhaps be stretching truth too far to say that you are trying to undo some of Columbus's work, and to stop up the hole he made in Ireland when he found a channel into which so much of what was best in the Old Country was destined to flow; for you and he have each your places in the great circle of Time and Compensation, and though you may seem to oppose one another across the centuries you are really answering the same call and working in the same vineyard. For we all set out to discover new worlds; and they are wise who realise early that human nature has roots that spread beneath the ocean bed, that neither latitude nor longitude nor time itself can change it to anything richer or stranger than what it is, and that furrows ploughed in it are like furrows ploughed in the sea sand. Columbus

tried to pour the wine of civilisation into very old bottles ; you, more wisely, are trying to pour the old wine of our country into new bottles. Yet there is no great unlikeness between the two tasks : it is all a matter of bottling ; the vintage is the same, infinite, inexhaustible, and as punctual as the sun and the seasons. It was Columbus's weakness as an administrator that he thought the bottle was everything ; it is your strength that you care for the vintage, and labour to preserve its flavour and soft fire.

Yours,

FILSON YOUNG.

RUAN MINOR, *September* 1906.

PREFACE

THE writing of historical biography is properly a work of partnership, to which public credit is awarded too often in an inverse proportion to the labours expended. One group of historians, labouring in the obscurest depths, dig and prepare the ground, searching and sifting the documentary soil with infinite labour and over an area immensely wide. They are followed by those scholars and specialists in history who give their lives to the study of a single period, and who sow literature in the furrows of research prepared by those who have preceded them. Last of all comes the essayist, or writer pure and simple, who reaps the harvest so laboriously prepared. The material lies all before him; the documents have been arranged, the immense contemporary fields of record and knowledge examined and searched for stray seeds of significance that may have blown over into them; the perspective is cleared for him, the relation of his facts to time and space and the march of human civilisation duly established; he has nothing to do but reap the field of harvest where it suits him, grind it in the wheels of whatever machinery his art is equipped with, and come before the public with

the finished product. And invariably in this unequal partnership he reaps most richly who reaps latest.

I am far from putting this narrative forward as the fine and ultimate product of all the immense labour and research of the historians of Columbus; but I am anxious to excuse myself for my apparent presumption in venturing into a field which might more properly be occupied by the expert historian. It would appear that the double work of acquiring the facts of a piece of human history and of presenting them through the medium of literature can hardly ever be performed by one and the same man. A lifetime must be devoted to the one, a year or two may suffice for the other; and an entirely different set of qualities must be employed in the two tasks. I cannot make it too clear that I make no claim to have added one iota of information or one fragment of original research to the expert knowledge regarding the life of Christopher Columbus; and when I add that the chief collection of facts and documents relating to the subject, the *Raccolta Columbiana*,[1] is a work consisting of more than thirty folio volumes, the general reader will be the more indulgent to me. But when a purely human interest led me some time ago to look into the literature of Columbus, I was amazed to find what seemed to me a striking disproportion between the extent of the modern historians' work on that subject and the knowledge or interest in it displayed by what we call the general reading

[1] *Raccolta di Documenti e Studi Publicati dalla R. Commissione Colombiana*, &c. Auspice il Ministero della Publica Istruzione. Rome, 1892–4.

public. I am surprised to find how many well-informed people there are whose knowledge of Columbus is comprised within two beliefs, one of them erroneous and the other doubtful: that he discovered America, and performed a trick with an egg. Americans, I think, are a little better informed on the subject than the English; perhaps because the greater part of modern critical research on the subject of Columbus has been the work of Americans. It is to bridge the immense gap existing between the labours of the historians and the indifference of the modern reader, between the *Raccolta Columbiana*, in fact, and the story of the egg, that I have written my narrative.

It is customary and proper to preface a work which is based entirely on the labours of other people with an acknowledgment of the sources whence it is drawn; and yet in the case of Columbus I do not know where to begin. In one way I am indebted to every serious writer who has even remotely concerned himself with the subject, from Columbus himself and Las Casas down to the editors of the *Raccolta*. The chain of historians has been so unbroken, the apostolic succession, so to speak, has passed with its heritage so intact from generation to generation, that the latest historian enshrines in his work the labours of all the rest. Yet there are necessarily some men whose work stands out as being more immediately seizable than that of others; in the period of whose care the lamp of inspiration has seemed to burn more brightly. In a matter of this kind I cannot pretend to be a judge, but

only to state my own experience and indebtedness; and in my work I have been chiefly helped by Las Casas,[1] indirectly of course by Ferdinand Columbus,[2] Herrera,[3] Oviedo,[4] Bernaldez,[5] Navarrete,[6] Asensio,[7] Mr. Payne,[8] Mr. Harrisse, Mr. Vignaud, Mr. Winsor, Mr. Thacher, Sir Clements Markham, Professor de Lollis, and S. Salvagnini. It is thus not among the dusty archives of Seville, Genoa, or San Domingo that I have searched, but in the archive formed by the writings of modern workers. To have myself gone back to original sources, even if I had been competent to do so, would have been in the case of Columbian research but a waste of time and a doing over again what has been done already with patience, diligence, and knowledge. The historians have been committed to the austere task of finding out and

[1] *Historia de las Indias*, escrito por Fray Bartholome de Las Casas, Obispo de Chiapas. Por el marques del Valle y D. J. Sancho Rayon. 5 vols. Madrid, 1875.

[2] *Historie del S. Fernando Colombo*, Nelle quali s'ha particulare e vera relatione dell' Ammiraglio D. Christoforo Colombo, suo padre, &c. Nuovamente di lingua spanuola tradotte nell' Italiana dal S. Alfonso Ulloa. Venice, 1571.

[3] *Historia general de los hechos de los Castellanos en las islas*, &c. 4 vols. Madrid, 1728.

[4] *Historia general e natural de las Indias, islas y Tierra-firme del mar Oceano*. Edit. Amador de los Rios. 4 vols. Madrid, 1851.

[5] *Historia de los Reyes Catolicos*. 2 vols. Seville, 1870.

[6] *Coleccion de los viages y descubrimientos*, &c. 5 vols. Madrid, 1825–37.

[7] *Cristobal Colon, su vida, sus viages, sus descubrimientos*. 2 vols. Barcelona, 1892.

[8] *History of the New World called America*. Oxford, 1892.

examining every fact and document in connection with their subject; and many of these facts and documents are entirely without human interest except in so far as they help to establish a date, a name, or a sum of money. It has been my agreeable and lighter task to test and assay the masses of bed-rock fact thus excavated by the historians for traces of the particular ore which I have been seeking. In fact I have tried to discover, from a reverent examination of all these monographs, essays, histories, memoirs, and controversies concerning what Christopher Columbus did, what Christopher Columbus *was;* believing as I do that any labour by which he can be made to live again, and from the dust of more than four hundred years be brought visibly to the mind's eye, will not be entirely without use and interest. Whether I have succeeded in doing so or not I cannot be the judge; I can only say that the labour of resuscitating a man so long buried beneath mountains of untruth and controversy has sometimes been so formidable as to have seemed hopeless. And yet one is always tempted back by the knowledge that Christopher Columbus is not only a name, but that the human being whom we so describe did actually once live and walk in the world; did actually sail and look upon seas where we may also sail and look; did stir with his feet the indestructible dust of this old Earth, and centre in himself, as we all do, the whole interest and meaning of the Universe. Truly the most commonplace fact, yet none the less amazing; and often when in the dust of documents he has seemed most dead and unreal to me I

have found courage from the entertainment of some deep or absurd reflection; such as that he did once undoubtedly, like other mortals, blink and cough and blow his nose. And if my readers could realise that fact throughout every page of this book, I should say that I had succeeded in my task.

To be more particular in my acknowledgments. In common with every modern writer on Columbus—and modern research on the history of Columbus is only thirty years old—I owe to the labours of Mr. Henry Harrisse,[1] the chief of modern Columbian historians, the indebtedness of the gold-miner to the gold-mine. In the matters of the Toscanelli correspondence and the early years of Columbus I have followed more closely Mr. Henry Vignaud, whose work[2] may be regarded as a continuation and re-examination—in some cases destructive—of that of Mr. Harrisse. Mr. Vignaud's work is happily not yet completed; we all look forward eagerly to the completion of that part of his *Études Critiques* dealing with the second half of the Admiral's life; and Mr. Vignaud seems to me to stand higher than all modern workers in this field in

[1] *Christophe Colomb devant l'Histoire.* Paris, 1892. *Christophe Colomb.* Son origine, sa vie, ses voyages, sa famille et ses descendants. Paris, 1884. *Christophe Colomb et la Corse.* Paris, 1883. *Fernand Colomb,* sa vie, ses œuvres. Essai critique. Paris, 1872. *Notes on Columbus.* New York, 1866.

[2] *Études Critiques* sur la vie de Colomb avant ses Decouvertes. Paris, 1905. *Toscanelli and Columbus.* London, 1903. *The real Birth-Date of Columbus:* A Critical Study of the Various Dates assigned to the Birth of Christopher Columbus. London, 1903. *Various Pamphlets.* London and Paris.

the patient and fearless discovery of the truth regarding certain very controversial matters, and also in ability to give a sound and reasonable interpretation to those obscurer facts or deductions in Columbus's life that seem doomed never to be settled by the aid of documents alone. It may be unseemly in me not to acknowledge indebtedness to Washington Irving,[1] but I cannot conscientiously do so. If I had been writing ten or fifteen years ago I might have taken his work seriously; but it is impossible that anything so one-sided, so inaccurate, so untrue to life, and so profoundly dull could continue to exist save in the absence of any critical knowledge or light on the subject. All that can be said for him is that he kept the lamp of interest in Columbus alive for English readers during the period that preceded the advent of modern critical research. Mr. Major's edition[2] of Columbus's letters has been freely consulted by me, as it must be by any one interested in the subject. Professor Justin Winsor's work[3] has provided an invaluable store of ripe scholarship in matters of cosmography and geographical detail; Sir Clements Markham's book,[4] by far the most trustworthy of modern English works on the subject, and a valuable record of the estab-

[1] *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus.* 4 vols. London, 1828.

[2] *Select Letters of Columbus*, with other Original Documents relating to his Four Voyages to the New World. Trans. and edit. by R. H. Major. London, 1870.

[3] *Christopher Columbus*, and how he Received and Imparted the Spirit of Discovery. Boston and New York, 1891.

[4] *Life of Christopher Columbus.* London, 1892.

lished facts in Columbus's life, has proved a sound guide in nautical matters; while the monograph of Mr. Elton,[1] which apparently did not promise much at first, since the author has followed some untrustworthy leaders as regards his facts, proved to be full of a fragrant charm produced by the writer's knowledge of and interest in sub-tropical vegetation; and it is delightfully filled with the names of gums and spices. To Mr. Vignaud I owe special thanks, not only for the benefits of his research and of his admirable works on Columbus, but also for personal help and encouragement. Equally cordial thanks are due to Mr. John Boyd Thacher,[2] whose work, giving as it does so large a selection of the Columbus documents both in facsimile, transliteration, and translation, is of the greatest service to every English writer on the subject of Columbus. It is the more to be regretted, since the documentary part of Mr. Thacher's work is so excellent, that in his critical studies he should have seemed to ignore some of the more important results of modern research. I am further particularly indebted to Mr. Thacher and to his publishers, Messrs. Putnam's Sons, for permission to reproduce certain illustrations in his work, and to avail myself also of his copies and translations of original Spanish and Italian documents. I have to thank Commendatore Guido Biagi,

[1] *The Career of Columbus.* London, 1892.

[2] *Christopher Columbus, His Life, His Work, His Remains:* as revealed by Original Printed and Manuscript Records, together with an Essay on Peter Martyr of Anghera and Bartolome de Las Casas, the first Historians of America. 3 vols. 4to. New York and London, 1903.

the keeper of the Laurentian Library in Florence, for his very kind help and letters of introduction to Italian librarians; Mr. Raymond Beazley, of Merton College, Oxford, for his most helpful correspondence; and Lord Dunraven for so kindly bringing, in the interests of my readers, his practical knowledge of navigation and seamanship to bear on the first voyage of Columbus. Finally my work has been helped and made possible by many intimate and personal kindnesses which, although they are not specified, are not the less deeply acknowledged.

September 1906.

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BOOK I

THE INNER LIGHT

THY WAY IS IN THE SEA, AND THY PATH IN THE GREAT WATERS, AND THY FOOTSTEPS ARE NOT KNOWN.

CHAPTER I

THE STREAM OF THE WORLD

A MAN standing on the sea-shore is perhaps as ancient and as primitive a symbol of wonder as the mind can conceive. Beneath his feet are the stones and grasses of an element that is his own, natural to him, in some degree belonging to him, at any rate accepted by him. He has place and condition there. Above him arches a world of immense void, fleecy sailing clouds, infinite clear blueness, shapes that change and dissolve; his day comes out of it, his source of light and warmth marches across it, night falls from it; showers and dews also, and the quiet influence of stars. Strange that impalpable element must be, and for ever unattainable by him; yet with its gifts of sun and shower, its furniture of winged life that inhabits also on the friendly soil, it has links and partnerships with life as he knows it and is a complement of earthly conditions. But at his feet there lies the fringe of another element, another condition, of a vaster and more simple unity than earth or air, which the primitive man of our picture knows to be not his at all. It is fluent and unstable, yet to be touched and felt; it rises and falls, moves and frets

about his very feet, as though it had a life and entity of its own, and was engaged upon some mysterious business. Unlike the silent earth and the dreaming clouds it has a voice that fills his world and, now low, now loud, echoes throughout his waking and sleeping life. Earth with her sprouting fruits behind and beneath him; sky, and larks singing, above him; before him, an eternal alien, the sea: he stands there upon the shore, arrested, wondering.

He lives, this man of our figure; he proceeds, as all must proceed, with the task and burden of life. One by one its miracles are unfolded to him; miracles of fire and cold, and pain and pleasure; the seizure of love, the terrible magic of reproduction, the sad miracle of death. He fights and lusts and endures; and, no more troubled by any wonder, sleeps at last. But throughout the days of his life, in the very act of his rude existence, this great tumultuous presence of the sea troubles and overbears him. Sometimes in its bellowing rage it terrifies him, sometimes in its tranquillity it allures him; but whatever he is doing, grubbing for roots, chipping experimentally with bones and stones, he has an eye upon it; and in his passage by the shore he pauses, looks, and wonders. His eye is led from the crumbling snow at his feet, past the clear green of the shallows, beyond the furrows of the nearer waves, to the calm blue of the distance; and in his glance there shines again that wonder, as in his breast stirs the vague longing and unrest that is the life-force of the world.

What is there beyond? It is the eternal question asked by the finite of the infinite, by the mortal of the immortal; answer to it there is none save in the unending preoccupation of life and labour. And if this old question was in truth first asked upon the sea-shore, it was asked most often and with the most painful wonder upon western shores, whence the journeying sun was seen to go down and quench himself in the sea. The generations that followed our primitive man grew fast in knowledge, and perhaps for a time wondered the less as they knew the more; but we may be sure they never ceased to wonder at what might lie beyond the sea. How much more must they have wondered if they looked west upon the waters, and saw the sun of each succeeding day sink upon a couch of glory where they could not follow? All pain aspires to oblivion, all toil to rest, all troubled discontent with what is present to what is unfamiliar and far away; and no power of knowledge and scientific fact will ever prevent human unhappiness from reaching out towards some land of dreams of which the burning brightness of a sea sunset is an image. Is it very hard to believe, then, that in that yearning towards the miracle of a sun quenched in sea distance, felt and felt again in human hearts through countless generations, the westward stream of human activity on this planet had its rise? Is it unreasonable to picture, on an earth spinning eastward, a treadmill rush of feet to follow the sinking light? The history of man's life in this world does not, at

any rate, contradict us. Wisdom, discovery, art, commerce, science, civilisation have all moved west across our world; have all in their cycles followed the sun; have all, in their day of power, risen in the East and set in the West.

This stream of life has grown in force and volume with the passage of ages. It has always set from shore to sea in countless currents of adventure and speculation; but it has set most strongly from East to West. On its broad bosom the seeds of life and knowledge have been carried throughout the world. It brought the people of Tyre and Carthage to the coasts and oceans of distant worlds; it carried the English from Jutland across cold and stormy waters to the islands of their conquest; it carried the Romans across half the world; it bore the civilisation of the far East to new life and virgin western soils; it carried the new West to the old East, and is in our day bringing back again the new East to the old West. Religions, arts, tradings, philosophies, vices and laws have been borne, a strange flotsam, upon its unchanging flood. It has had its springs and neaps, its trembling high-water marks, its hour of affluence, when the world has been flooded with golden humanity; its ebb and effluence also, when it has seemed to shrink and desert the kingdoms set upon its shores. The fifteenth century in Western Europe found it at a pause in its movements: it had brought

the trade and the learning of the East to the verge of the Old World, filling the harbours of the Mediterranean with ships and the monasteries of Italy and Spain with wisdom; and in the subsequent and punctual decadence that followed this flood, there gathered in the returning tide a greater energy and volume which was to carry the Old World bodily across the ocean. And yet, for all their wisdom and power, the Spanish and Portuguese were still in the attitude of our primitive man, standing on the sea-shore and looking out in wonder across the sea.

The flood of the life-stream began to set again, and little by little to rise and inundate Western Europe, floating off the galleys and caravels of King Alphonso of Portugal, and sending them to feel their way along the coasts of Africa; a little later drawing the mind of Prince Henry the Navigator to devote his life to the conquest and possession of the unknown. In his great castle on the promontory of Sagres, with the voice of the Atlantic thundering in his ears, and its mists and sprays bounding his vision, he felt the full force of the stream, and stretched his arms to the mysterious West. But the inner light was not yet so brightly kindled that he dared to follow his heart; his ships went south and south again, to brave on each voyage the dangers and terrors that lay along the unknown African coast, until at length his captains saw the Cape of Good Hope. South and West and East were in those days confusing terms; for it was the

East that men were thinking of when they set their faces to the setting sun, and it was a new road to the East that they sought when they felt their way southward along the edge of the world. But the rising tide of discovery was working in that moment, engaging the brains of innumerable sages, stirring the wonder of innumerable mariners; reaching also, little by little, to quarters less immediately concerned with the business of discovery. Ships carried the strange tidings of new coasts and new islands from port to port throughout the Mediterranean; Venetians on the lagoons, Ligurians on the busy trading wharves of Genoa, were discussing the great subject; and as the tide rose and spread, it floated one ship of life after another that was destined for the great business of adventure. Some it inspired to dream and speculate, and to do no more than that; many a heart also to brave efforts and determinations that were doomed to come to nothing and to end only in failure. And among others who felt the force and was swayed and lifted by the prevailing influence, there lived, some four and a half centuries ago, a little boy playing about the wharves of Genoa, well known to his companions as Christoforo, son of Domenico the wool-weaver, who lived in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello.

CHAPTER II

THE HOME IN GENOA

IT is often hard to know how far back we should go in the ancestry of a man whose life and character we are trying to reconstruct. The life that is in him is not his own, but is mysteriously transmitted through the life of his parents; to the common stock of his family, flesh of their flesh, bone of their bone, character of their character, he has but added his own personality. However far back we go in his ancestry, there is something of him to be traced, could we but trace it; and although it soon becomes so widely scattered that no separate fraction of it seems to be recognisable, we know that, generations back, we may come upon some sympathetic fact, some reservoir of the essence that was him, in which we can find the source of many of his actions, and the clue, perhaps, to his character.

In the case of Columbus we are spared this dilemma. The past is reticent enough about the man himself; and about his ancestors it is almost silent. We know that he had a father and grandfather, as all grandsons of Adam have had; but we can be certain of very little more than that. He came of a race of Italian yeomen inhabiting the Apennine valleys; and in the vale of

Fontanabuona, that runs up into the hills behind Genoa, the two streams of family from which he sprang were united. His father from one hamlet, his mother from another; the towering hills behind, the Mediterranean shining in front; love and marriage in the valley; and a little boy to come of it whose doings were to shake the world.

His family tree begins for us with his grandfather, Giovanni Colombo of Terra-Rossa, one of the hamlets in the valley—concerning whom many human facts may be inferred, but only three are certainly known; that he lived, begot children, and died. Lived, first at Terra-Rossa, and afterwards upon the sea-shore at Quinto; begot children in number three—Antonio, Battestina, and Domenico, the father of our Christopher; and died, because one of the two facts in his history is that in the year 1444 he was not alive, being referred to in a legal document as *quondam*, or, as we should say, "the late." Of his wife, Christopher's grandmother, since she never bought or sold or witnessed anything requiring the record of legal document, history speaks no word; although doubtless some pleasant and picturesque old lady, or lady other than pleasant and picturesque, had place in the experience or imagination of young Christopher. Of the pair, old Quondam Giovanni alone survives the obliterating drift of generations, which the shores and brown slopes of Quinto al Mare, where he sat in the sun and looked about him, have also survived. Doubtless old Quondam could have told us many things

about Domenico, and his over-sanguine buyings and sellings; have perhaps told us something about Christopher's environment, and cleared up our doubts concerning his first home; but he does not. He will sit in the sun there at Quinto, and sip his wine, and say his Hail Marys, and watch the sails of the feluccas leaning over the blue floor of the Mediterranean as long as you please; but of information about son or family, not a word. He is content to have survived, and triumphantly twinkles his two dates at us across the night of time. 1440, alive; 1444, not alive any longer: and so hail and farewell, Grandfather John.

Of Antonio and Battestina, the uncle and aunt of Columbus, we know next to nothing. Uncle Antonio inherited the estate of Terra-Rossa, Aunt Battestina was married in the valley; and so no more of either of them; except that Antonio, who also married, had sons, cousins of Columbus, who in after years, when he became famous, made themselves unpleasant, as poor relations will, by recalling themselves to his remembrance and suggesting that something might be done for them. I have a belief, supported by no historical fact or document, that between the families of Domenico and Antonio there was a mild cousinly feud. I believe they did not like each other. Domenico, as we shall see presently, was sanguine and venturesome, a great buyer and seller, a maker of bargains in which he

generally came off second best. Antonio, who settled in Terra-Rossa, the paternal property, doubtless looked askance at these enterprises from his vantage-ground of a settled income; doubtless also, on the occasion of visits exchanged between the two families, he would comment upon the unfortunate enterprises of his brother; and as the children of both brothers grew up, they would inherit and exaggerate, as children will, this settled difference between their respective parents. This, of course, may be entirely untrue, but I think it possible, and even likely; for Columbus in after life displayed a very tender regard for members of his family, but never to our knowledge makes any reference to these cousins of his, till they send emissaries to him in his hour of triumph.

At any rate, among the influences that surrounded him at Genoa we may reckon this uncle and aunt and their children—dim ghosts to us, but to him real people, who walked and spoke, and blinked their eyes and moved their limbs, like the men and women of our own time. Less of a ghost to us, though still a very shadowy and doubtful figure, is Domenico himself, Christopher's father. He at least is a man in whom we can feel a warm interest, as the one who actually begat and reared the man of our story. We shall see him later, and chiefly in difficulties; executing deeds and leases, and striking a great variety of legal attitudes, to the witnessing of which various members of his family were called in. Little enough good did they

to him at the time, poor Domenico; but he was a benefactor to posterity without knowing it, and in these grave notarial documents preserved almost the only evidence that we have as to the early days of his illustrious son. A kind, sanguine man, this Domenico, who, if he failed to make a good deal of money in his various enterprises, at least had some enjoyment of them, as the man who buys and sells and strikes legal attitudes in every age desires and has. He was a wool-carder by trade, but that was not enough for him; he must buy little bits of estates here and there; must even keep a tavern, where he and his wife could entertain the foreign sailors and hear the news of the world; where also, although perhaps they did not guess it, a sharp pair of ears were also listening, and a pair of round eyes gazing, and an inquisitive face set in astonishment at the strange tales that went about.

There is one fragment of fact about this Domenico that greatly enlarges our knowledge of him. He was a wool-weaver, as we know; he also kept a tavern, and no doubt justified the adventure on the plea that it would bring him customers for his woollen cloth; for your buyer and seller never lacks a reason either for his selling or buying. Presently he is buying again; this time, still with striking of legal attitudes, calling together of relations, and accompaniments of crabbed Latin notarial documents, a piece of ground in the suburbs of Genoa, consisting of scrub and undergrowth, which cannot have been of any earthly

use to him. But also, according to the documents, there went some old wine-vats with the land. Domenico, taking a walk after Mass on some feast-day, sees the land and the wine-vats; thinks dimly but hopefully how old wine-vats, if of no use to any other human creature, should at least be of use to a tavern-keeper; hurries back, overpowers the perfunctory objections of his complaisant wife, and on the morrow of the feast is off to the notary's office. We may be sure the wine-vats lay and rotted there, and furnished no monetary profit to the wool-weaving tavern-keeper; but doubtless they furnished him a rich profit of another kind when he walked about his newly-acquired property, and explained what he was going to do with the wine-vats.

And besides the weaving of wool and pouring of wine and buying and selling of land, there were more human occupations, which Domenico was not the man to neglect. He had married, about the year 1450, one Susanna, a daughter of Giacomo of Fontana-Rossa, a silk weaver who lived in the hamlet near to Terra-Rossa. Domenico's father was of the more consequence of the two, for he had, as well as his home in the valley, a house at Quinto, where he probably kept a felucca for purposes of trade with Alexandria and the Islands. Perhaps the young people were married at Quinto, but if so they did not live there long, moving soon into Genoa, where Domenico could more conveniently work at his trade. The wool-weavers at that time lived in a quarter outside the old

city walls, between them and the outer borders of the city, which is now occupied by the park and public gardens. Here they had their dwellings and workshops, their schools and institutions, receiving every protection and encouragement from the Signoria, who recognised the importance of the wool trade and its allied industries to Genoa. Cloth-weavers, blanket-makers, silk-weavers, and velvet-makers all lived in this quarter, and held their houses under the neighbouring abbey of San Stefano. There are two houses mentioned in documents which seem to have been in the possession of Domenico at different times. One was in the suburbs outside the Olive Gate; the other was farther in, by St. Andrew's Gate, and quite near to the sea. The house outside the Olive Gate has disappeared; and it was probably here that our Christopher first saw the light, and pleased Domenico's heart with his little cries and struggles. Neither the day nor even the year is certainly known, but there is most reason to believe that it was in the year 1451.[1] They must have moved soon afterwards to the house in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello, No. 37, in which most of Christopher's childhood was certainly passed. This is a house close to St. Andrew's Gate, which gate still stands in a beautiful and ruinous condition.

From the new part of Genoa, and from the Via XX Settembre, you turn into the little Piazza di Ponticello just opposite the church of San Stefano. In a moment you are in old Genoa, which is to-day in appearance

[1] See Appendix A.

virtually the same as the place in which Christopher and his little brothers and sisters made the first steps of their pilgrimage through this world. If the Italian sun has been shining fiercely upon you in the great modern thoroughfare, you will turn into this quarter of narrow streets and high houses with grateful relief. The past seems to meet you there; and from the Piazza, gay with its little provision-shops and fruit-stalls, you walk up the slope of the Vico Dritto di Ponticello, leaving the sunlight behind you, and entering the narrow street like a traveller entering a mountain gorge.

It is a very curious street this; I suppose there is no street in the world that has more character. Genoa invented sky-scrapers long before Columbus had discovered America, or America had invented steel frames for high building; but although many of the houses in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello are seven and eight storeys high, the width of the street from house-wall to house-wall does not average more than nine feet. The street is not straight, moreover; it winds a little in its ascent to the old city wall and St. Andrew's Gate, so that you do not even see the sky much as you look forward and upwards. The jutting cornices of the roofs, often beautifully decorated, come together in a medley of angles and corners that practically roof the street over; and only here and there do you see a triangle or a parallelogram of the vivid brilliant blue that is the sky. Besides being seven or eight storeys high, the houses are the narrowest in the world; I should think that their average width on the street front is ten feet.

ST. ANDREW'S GATE AND THE VICO DRITTO DI PONTICELLO, GENOA

Showing Columbus's House

3099

So as you walk up this street where young Christopher lived you must think of it in these three dimensions: towering slices of houses, ten or twelve feet in width: a street often not more than eight and seldom more than fifteen feet in width; and the walls of the houses themselves, painted in every colour, green and pink and grey and white, and trellised with the inevitable green window-shutters of the South, standing like cliffs on each side of you seven or eight rooms high. There being so little horizontal space for the people to live there, what little there is is most economically used; and all across the tops of the houses, high above your head, the cliffs are joined by wires and clothes-lines from which thousands of brightly-dyed garments are always hanging and fluttering; higher still, where the top storeys of the houses become merged in roof, there are little patches of garden and greenery, where geraniums and delicious tangling creepers uphold thus high above the ground the fertile tradition of earth.

You walk slowly up the paved street. One of its characteristics, which it shares with the old streets of most Italian towns, is that it is only used by foot-passengers, being of course too narrow for wheels; and it is paved across with flagstones from door to door, so that the feet and the voices echo pleasantly in it, and make a music of their own. Without exception the ground floor of every house is a shop—the gayest, busiest, most industrious little shops in the world. There are shops for provisions, where the delightful macaroni lies in its various bins, and all kinds of frugal and nourishing

foods are offered for sale. There are shops for clothes and dyed finery; there are shops for boots, where boots hang in festoons like onions outside the window—I have never seen so many boot-shops at once in my life as I saw in the streets surrounding the house of Columbus. And every shop that is not a provision-shop or a clothes-shop or a boot-shop, is a wine-shop—or at least you would think so, until you remember, after you have walked through the street, what a lot of other kinds of shops you have seen on your way. There are shops for newspapers and tobacco, for cheap jewellery, for brushes, for chairs and tables and articles of wood; there are shops with great stacks and piles of crockery; there are shops for cheese and butter and milk—indeed from this one little street in Genoa you could supply every necessary and every luxury of a humble life.

As you still go up, the street takes a slight bend; and immediately before you, you see it spanned by the lofty crumbled arch of St. Andrew's Gate, with its two mighty towers one on each side. Just as you see it you are at Columbus's house. The number is thirty-seven; it is like any of the other houses, tall and narrow; and there is a slab built into the wall above the first storey, on which is written this inscription :—

NVLLA DOMVS TITVLO DIGNIOR
HEIC
PATERNIS IN AEDIBV
CHRISTOPHORVS COLVMBVS
PVERITIAM
PRIMAMQVE IVVENTAM TRANSEGIT

You stop and look at it; and presently you become conscious of a difference between it and all the other houses. They are all alert, busy, noisy, crowded with life in every storey, oozing vitality from every window; but of all the narrow vertical strips that make up the houses of the street, this strip numbered thirty-seven is empty, silent, and dead. The shutters veil its windows; within it is dark, empty of furniture, and inhabited only by a memory and a spirit. It is a strange place in which to stand and to think of all that has happened since the man of our thoughts looked forth from these windows, a common little boy. The world is very much alive in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello; the little freshet of life that flows there flows loud and incessant; and yet into what oceans of death and silence has it not poured since it carried forth Christopher on its stream! One thinks of the continent of that New World that he discovered, and all the teeming millions of human lives that have sprung up and died down, and sprung up again, and spread and increased there; all the ploughs that have driven into its soil, the harvests that have ripened, the waving acres and miles of grain that have answered the call of Spring and Autumn since first the bow of his boat grated on the shore of Guanahani. And yet of the two scenes this narrow shuttered house in a bye-street of Genoa is at once the more wonderful and more credible; for it contains the elements of the other. Walls and floors and a roof, a place to eat and sleep in, a place to work and found a family, and give tangible

environment to a human soul—there is all human enterprise and discovery, effort, adventure, and life in that.

If Christopher wanted to go down to the sea he would have to pass under the Gate of St. Andrew, with the old prison, now pulled down to make room for the modern buildings, on his right, and go down the Salita del Prione, which is a continuation of the Vico Dritto di Ponticello. It slopes downwards from the Gate as the first street sloped upwards to it; and it contains the same assortment of shops and of houses, the same mixture of handicrafts and industries, as were seen in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello. Presently he would come to the Piazza dell' Erbe, where there is no grass, but only a pleasant circle of little houses and shops, with already a smack of the sea in them, chiefly suggested by the shops of instrument-makers, where to-day there are compasses and sextants and chronometers. Out of the Piazza you come down the Via di San Donato and into the Piazza of that name, where for over nine centuries the church of San Donato has faced the sun and the weather. From there Christopher's young feet would follow the winding Via di San Bernato, a street also inhabited by craftsmen and workers in wood and metal; and at the last turn of it, a gash of blue between the two cliff-walls of houses, you see the Mediterranean.

Here, then, between the narrow little house by the Gate and the clamour and business of the sea-front,

STREET IN GENOA

our Christopher's feet carried him daily during some part of his childish life. What else he did, what he thought and felt, what little reflections he had, are but matters of conjecture. Genoa will tell you nothing more. You may walk over the very spot where he was born; you may unconsciously tread in the track of his vanished feet; you may wander about the wharves of the city, and see the ships loading and unloading—different ships, but still trafficking in commodities not greatly different from those of his day; you may climb the heights behind Genoa, and look out upon the great curving Gulf from Porto Fino to where the Cape of the western Riviera dips into the sea; you may walk along the coast to Savona, where Domenico had one of his many habitations, where he kept the tavern, and whither Christopher's young feet must also have walked; and you may come back and search again in the harbour, from the old Mole and the Bank of St. George to where the port and quays stretch away to the medley of sailing-ships and steamers; but you will not find any sign or trace of Christopher. No echo of the little voice that shrilled in the narrow street sounds in the Vico Dritto; the houses stand gaunt and straight, with a brilliant strip of blue sky between their roofs and the cool street beneath; but they give you nothing of what you seek. If you see a little figure running towards you in a blue smock, the head fair-haired, the face blue-eyed and a little freckled with the strong sunshine, it is not a real figure; it is a child

of your dreams and a ghost of the past. You may chase him while he runs about the wharves and stumbles over the ropes, but you will never catch him. He runs before you, zigzagging over the cobbles, up the sunny street, into the narrow house; out again, running now towards the Duomo, hiding in the porch of San Stefano, where the weavers held their meetings; back again along the wharves; surely he is hiding behind that mooring-post! But you look, and he is not there—nothing but the old harbour dust that the wind stirs into a little eddy while you look. For he belongs not to you or me, this child; he is not yet enslaved to the great purpose, not yet caught up into the machinery of life. His eye has not yet caught the fire of the sun setting on a western sea; he is still free and happy, and belongs only to those who love him. Father and mother, brothers Bartolomeo and Giacomo, sister Biancinetta, aunts, uncles, and cousins possibly, and possibly for a little while an old grandmother at Quinto—these were the people to whom that child belonged. The little life of his first decade, unviolated by documents or history, lives happily in our dreams, as blank as sunshine.

CHAPTER III

YOUNG CHRISTOPHER

CHRISTOPHER was fourteen years old when he first went to sea. That is his own statement, and it is one of the few of his autobiographical utterances that we need not doubt. From it, and from a knowledge of certain other dates, we are able to construct some vague picture of his doings before he left Italy and settled in Portugal. Already in his young heart he was feeling the influence that was to direct and shape his destiny; already, towards his home in Genoa, long ripples from the commotion of maritime adventure in the West were beginning to spread. At the age of ten he was apprenticed to his father, who undertook, according to the indentures, to provide him with board and lodging, a blue gabardine and a pair of good shoes, and various other matters in return for his service. But there is no reason to suppose that he ever occupied himself very much with wool-weaving. He had a vocation quite other than that, and if he ever did make any cloth there must have been some strange thoughts and imaginings woven into it, as he plied the shuttle. Most of his biographers, relying upon a doubtful statement

in the life of him written by his son Ferdinand, would have us send him at the age of twelve to the distant University of Pavia, there, poor mite, to sit at the feet of learned professors studying Latin, mathematics, and cosmography; but fortunately it is not necessary to believe so improbable a statement. What is much more likely about his education—for education he had, although not of the superior kind with which he has been credited—is that in the blank, sunny time of his childhood he was sent to one of the excellent schools established by the weavers in their own quarter, and that there or afterwards he came under some influence, both religious and learned, which stamped him the practical visionary that he remained throughout his life. Thereafter, between his sea voyagings and expeditions about the Mediterranean coasts, he no doubt acquired knowledge in the only really practical way that it can be acquired; that is to say, he received it as and when he needed it. What we know is that he had in later life some knowledge of the works of Aristotle, Julius Cæsar, Seneca, Pliny, and Ptolemy; of Ahmet-Ben-Kothair the Arabic astronomer, Rochid the Arabian, and the Rabbi Samuel the Jew; of Isadore the Spaniard, and Bede and Scotus the Britons; of Strabo the German, Gerson the Frenchman, and Nicolaus de Lira the Italian. These names cover a wide range, but they do not imply university education. Some of them merely suggest acquaintance with the *Imago Mundi;* others imply that selective faculty, the power of choosing what can help

a man's purpose and of rejecting what is useless to it, that is one of the marks of genius, and an outward sign of the inner light.

We must think of him, then, at school in Genoa, grinding out the tasks that are the common heritage of all small boys; working a little at the weaving, interestedly enough at first, no doubt, while the importance of having a loom appealed to him, but also no doubt rapidly cooling off in his enthusiasm as the pastime became a task, and the restriction of indoor life began to be felt. For if ever there was a little boy who loved to idle about the wharves and docks, here was that little boy. It was here, while he wandered about the crowded quays and listened to the medley of talk among the foreign sailors, and looked beyond the masts of the ships into the blue distance of the sea, that the desire to wander and go abroad upon the face of the waters must first have stirred in his heart. The wharves of Genoa in those days combined in themselves all the richness of romance and adventure, buccaneering, trading, and treasure-snatching, that has ever crowded the pages of romance. There were galleys and caravels, barques and feluccas, pinnaces and caraccas. There were slaves in the galleys, and bowmen to keep the slaves in subjection. There were dark-bearded Spaniards, fair-haired Englishmen; there were Greeks, and Indians, and Portuguese. The bales of goods on the harbour-side were eloquent of distant

lands, and furnished object-lessons in the only geography that young Christopher was likely to be learning. There was cotton from Egypt, and tin and lead from Southampton. There were butts of Malmsey from Candia; aloes and cassia and spices from Socotra; rhubarb from Persia; silk from India; wool from Damascus, raw wool also from Calais and Norwich. No wonder if the little house in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello became too narrow for the boy; and no wonder that at the age of fourteen he was able to have his way, and go to sea. One can imagine him gradually acquiring an influence over his father, Domenico, as his will grew stronger and firmer—he with one grand object in life, Domenico with none; he with a single clear purpose, and Domenico with innumerable cloudy ones. And so, on some day in the distant past, there were farewells and anxious hearts in the weaver's house, and Christopher, member of the crew of some trading caravel or felucca, a diminishing object to the wet eyes of his mother, sailed away, and faded into the blue distance.

They had lost him, although perhaps they did not realise it; from the moment of his first voyage the sea claimed him as her own. Widening horizons, slatting of cords and sails in the wind, storms and stars and strange landfalls and long idle calms, thunder of surges, tingle of spray, and eternal labouring and threshing and cleaving of infinite waters—these were to be his portion and true home hereafter. Attendances at Court, conferences with learned monks and bishops, sojourns on lonely islands,

love under stars in the gay, sun-smitten Spanish towns, governings and parleyings in distant, undreamed-of lands —these were to be but incidents in his true life, which was to be fulfilled in the solitude of sea watches.

When he left his home on this first voyage, he took with him one other thing besides the restless longing to escape beyond the line of sea and sky. Let us mark well this possession of his, for it was his companion and guiding-star throughout a long and difficult life, his chart and compass, astrolabe and anchor, in one. Religion has in our days fallen into decay among men of intellect and achievement. The world has thrown it, like a worn garment or an old skin, from off its body, the thing itself being no longer real and alive, and in harmony with the life of an age that struggles towards a different kind of truth. It is hard, therefore, for us to understand exactly how the religion of Columbus entered so deeply into his life and brooded so widely over his thoughts. Hardest of all is it for people whose only experience of religion is of Puritan inheritance to comprehend how, in the fifteenth century, the strong intellect was strengthened, and the stout heart fortified, by the thought of hosts of saints and angels hovering above a man's incomings and outgoings to guide and protect him. Yet in an age that really had the gift of faith, in which religion was real and vital, and part of the business of every man's daily life; in which it stood honoured in the world, loaded with riches, crowned with learning, wielding government both temporal and spiritual, it was a very brave panoply

for the soul of man. The little boy in Genoa, with the fair hair and blue eyes and grave freckled face that made him remarkable among his dark companions, had no doubt early received and accepted the vast mysteries of the Christian faith; and as that other mystery began to grow in his mind, and that idea of worlds that might lie beyond the sea-line began to take shape in his thoughts, he found in the holy wisdom of the prophets, and the inspired writings of the fathers, a continual confirmation of his faith. The full conviction of these things belongs to a later period of his life; but probably, during his first voyagings in the Mediterranean, there hung in his mind echoes of psalms and prophecies that had to do with things beyond the world of his vision and experience. The sun, whose going forth is to the end of heaven, his circuit back to the end of it, and from whose heat there is nothing hid; the truth, holy and prevailing, that knows no speech nor language where its voice is not heard; the great and wide sea, with its creeping things innumerable, and beasts small and great—no wonder if these things impressed him, and if gradually, as his way fell clearer before him, and the inner light began to shine more steadily, he came to believe that he had a special mission to carry the torch of the faith across the Sea of Darkness, and be himself the bearer of a truth that was to go through all the earth, and of words that were to travel to the world's end.

In this faith, then, and with this equipment, and about the year 1465, Christopher Columbus began his

sea travels. His voyages would be doubtless at first much along the coasts, and across to Alexandria and the Islands. There would be returnings to Genoa, and glad welcomings by the little household in the narrow street; in 1472 and 1473 he was with his father at Savona, helping with the wool-weaving and tavern-keeping; possibly also there were interviews with Benincasa, who was at that time living in Genoa, and making his famous sea-charts. Perhaps it was in his studio that Christopher first saw a chart, and first fell in love with the magic that can transfer the shapes of oceans and continents to a piece of paper. Then he would be off again in another ship, to the Golden Horn perhaps, or the Black Sea, for the Genoese had a great Crimean trade. This is all conjecture, but very reasonable conjecture; what we know for a fact is that he saw the white gum drawn from the lentiscus shrubs in Chio at the time of their flowering; that fragrant memory is preserved long afterwards in his own writings, evoked by some incident in the newly-discovered islands of the West. There are vague rumours and stories of his having been engaged in various expeditions—among them one fitted out in Genoa by John of Anjou to recover the kingdom of Naples for King Réné of Provence; but there is no reason to believe these rumours: good reason to disbelieve them, rather.

The lives that the sea absorbs are passed in a great variety of adventure and experience, but so far as the world is concerned they are passed in a profound obscurity; and we need not wonder that of all the mariners who

used those seas, and passed up and down, and held their course by the stars, and reefed their sails before the sudden squalls that came down from the mountains, and shook them out again in the calm sunshine that followed, there is no record of the one among their number who was afterwards to reef and steer and hold his course to such mighty purpose. For this period, then, we must leave him to the sea, and to the vast anonymity of sea life.

CHAPTER IV

DOMENICO

CHRISTOPHER is gone, vanished over that blue horizon; and the tale of life in Genoa goes on without him very much as before, except that Domenico has one apprentice less, and, a matter becoming of some importance in the narrow condition of his finances, one boy less to feed and clothe. For good Domenico, alas! is no economist. Those hardy adventures of his in the buying and selling line do not prosper him; the tavern does not pay; perhaps the tavern-keeper is too hospitable; at any rate, things are not going well. And yet Domenico had a good start; as his brother Antonio has doubtless often told him, he had the best of old Giovanni's inheritance; he had the property at Quinto, and other property at Ginestreto, and some ground rents at Pradella; a tavern at Savona, a shop there and at Genoa—really, Domenico has no excuse for his difficulties. In 1445 he was selling land at Quinto, presumably with the consent of old Giovanni, if he was still alive; and if he was not living, then immediately after his death, in the first pride of possession. In 1450 he bought a pleasant house at Quarto, a village on the sea-shore about a mile to the west of Quinto and

about five miles to the east of Genoa. It was probably a pure speculation, as he immediately leased the house for two years, and never lived in it himself, although it was a pleasant place, with an orchard of olives and figs and various other trees—*arboratum olivis ficubus et aliis diversis arboribus.* His next recorded transaction is in 1466, when he went security for a friend, doubtless with disastrous results. In 1473 he sold the house at the Olive Gate, that suburban dwelling where probably Christopher was born, and in 1474 he invested the proceeds of that sale in a piece of land which I have referred to before, situated in the suburbs of Savona, with which were sold those agreeable and useless wine-vats. Domenico was living at Savona then, and the property which he so fatuously acquired consisted of two large pieces of land on the Via Valcalda, containing a few vines, a plantation of fruit-trees, and a large area of shrub and underwood. The price, however, was never paid in full, and was the cause of a lawsuit which dragged on for forty years, and was finally settled by Don Diego Columbus, Christopher's son, who sent a special authority from Hispaniola.

Owing, no doubt, to the difficulties that this unfortunate purchase plunged him into, Domenico was obliged to mortgage his house at St. Andrew's Gate in the year 1477; and in 1489 he finally gave it up to Jacob Baverelus, the cheesemonger, his son-in-law. Susanna, who had been the witness of his melancholy transactions for so many years, and possibly the mainstay of that de-

clining household, died in 1494; but not, we may hope, before she had heard of the fame of her son Christopher. Domenico, in receipt of a pension from the famous Admiral of the Ocean, and no doubt talking with a deal of pride and inaccuracy about the discovery of the New World, lived on until 1498; when he died also, and vanished out of this world. He had fulfilled a noble destiny in being the father of Christopher Columbus.

CHAPTER V

SEA THOUGHTS

THE long years that Christopher Columbus spent at sea in making voyages to and from his home in Genoa, years so blank to us, but to him who lived them so full of life and active growth, were most certainly fruitful in training and equipping him for that future career of which as yet, perhaps, he did not dream. The long undulating waves of the Mediterranean, with land appearing and dissolving away in the morning and evening mists, the business of ship life, harsh and rough in detail, but not too absorbing to the mind of a common mariner to prevent any thoughts he might have finding room to grow and take shape; sea breezes, sea storms, sea calms; these were the setting of his knowledge and experience as he fared from port to port and from sea to sea. He is a very elusive figure in that environment of misty blue, very hard to hold and identify, very shy of our scrutiny, and inaccessible even to our speculation. If we would come up with him, and place ourselves in some kind of sympathy with the thoughts that were forming in his brain, it is necessary that we should, for the moment, forget much of what we know of the world, and assume the imperfect knowledge of the globe that man pos-

sessed in those years when Columbus was sailing the Mediterranean.

That the earth was a round globe of land and water was a fact that, after many contradictions and uncertainties, intelligent men had by this time accepted. A conscious knowledge of the world as a whole had been a part of human thought for many hundreds of years; and the sphericity of the earth had been a theory in the sixth century before Christ. In the fourth century Aristotle had watched the stars and eclipses; in the third century Eratosthenes had measured a degree of latitude, and measured it wrong; in the second century the philosopher Crates had constructed a rude sort of globe, on which were marked the known kingdoms of the earth, and some also unknown. With the coming of the Christian era the theory of the roundness of the earth began to be denied; and as knowledge and learning became gathered into the hands of the Church they lost something of their clarity and singleness, and began to be used arbitrarily as evidence for or against other and less material theories. St. Chrysostom opposed the theory of the earth's roundness; St. Isidore taught it; and so also did St. Augustine, as we might expect from a man of his wisdom who lived so long in a monastery that looked out to sea from a high point, and who wrote the words *Ubi magnitudo, ibi veritas.* In the sixth century of the Christian era Bishop Cosmas gave much thought to this matter of a round world, and found a new argument which to his mind (poor Cosmas!) disposed of it very clearly; for he argued that, if the world were

round, the people dwelling at the antipodes could not see Christ at His coming, and that therefore the earth was not round. But Bede, in the eighth century, established it finally as a part of human knowledge that the earth and all the heavenly bodies were spheres, and after that the fact was not again seriously disputed.

What lay beyond the frontier of the known was a speculation inseparable from the spirit of exploration. Children, and people who do not travel, are generally content, when their thoughts stray beyond the paths trodden by their feet, to believe that the greater world is but a continuation on every side of their own environment; indeed, without the help of sight or suggestion, it is almost impossible to believe anything else. If you stand on an eminence in a great plain and think of the unseen country that lies beyond the horizon, trying to visualise it and imagine that you see it, the eye of imagination can only see the continuance or projection of what is seen by the bodily sight. If you think, you can occupy the invisible space with a landscape made up from your own memory and knowledge: you may think of mountain chains and rivers, although there are none visible to your sight, or you may imagine vast seas and islands, oceans and continents. This, however, is thought, not pure imagination; and even so, with every advantage of thought and knowledge, you will not be able to imagine beyond your horizon a space of sea so wide that the farther shore is invisible, and yet imagine the farther shore also. You will see America across the Atlantic and Japan across the Pacific;

but you cannot see, in one single effort of the imagination, an Atlantic of empty blue water stretching to an empty horizon, another beyond that equally vast and empty, another beyond that, and so on until you have spanned the thousand horizons that lie between England and America. The mind, that is to say, works in steps and spans corresponding to the spans of physical sight; it cannot clear itself enough from the body, or rise high enough beyond experience, to comprehend spaces so much vaster than anything ever seen by the eye of man. So also with the stretching of the horizon which bounded human knowledge of the earth. It moved step by step; if one of Prince Henry's captains, creeping down the west coast of Africa, discovered a cape a hundred miles south of the known world, the most he could probably do was to imagine that there might lie, still another hundred miles farther south, another cape; to sail for it in faith and hope, to find it, and to imagine another possibility yet another hundred miles away. So far as experience went back, faith could look forward. It is thus with the common run of mankind; yesterday's march is the measure of to-morrow's; as much as they have done once, they may do again; they fear it will be not much more; they hope it may be not much less.

The history of the exploration of the world up to the day when Columbus set sail from Palos is just such a history of steps. The Phœnicians coasting from harbour to harbour through the Mediterranean; the Romans marching from camp to camp, from country to country;

the Jutes venturing in their frail craft into the stormy northern seas, making voyages a little longer and more daring every time, until they reached England; the captains of Prince Henry of Portugal feeling their way from voyage to voyage down the coast of Africa—there are no bold flights into the incredible here, but patient and business-like progress from one stepping-stone to another. Dangers and hardships there were, and brave followings of the faint will-o'-the-wisp of faith in what lay beyond; but there were no great launchings into space. They but followed a line that was the continuance or projection of the line they had hitherto followed; what they did was brave and glorious, but it was reasonable. What Columbus did, on the contrary, was, as we shall see later, against all reason and knowledge. It was a leap in the dark towards some star invisible to all but him; for he who sets forth across the desert sand or sea must have a brighter sun to guide him than that which sets and rises on the day of the small man.

Our familiarity with maps and atlases makes it difficult for us to think of the world in other terms than those of map and diagram; knowledge and science have focussed things for us, and our imagination has in consequence shrunk. It is almost impossible, when thinking of the earth as a whole, to think about it except as a picture drawn, or as a small globe with maps traced upon

it. I am sure that our imagination has a far narrower angle—to borrow a term from the science of lenses—than the imagination of men who lived in the fifteenth century. They thought of the world in its actual terms —seas, islands, continents, gulfs, rivers, oceans. Columbus had seen maps and charts—among them the famous *portolani* of Benincasa at Genoa; but I think it unlikely that he was so familiar with them as to have adopted their terms in his thoughts about the earth. He had seen the Mediterranean and sailed upon it before he had seen a chart of it; he knew a good deal of the world itself before he had seen a map of it. He had more knowledge of the actual earth and sea than he had of pictures or drawings of them; and therefore, if we are to keep in sympathetic touch with him, we must not think too closely of maps, but of land and sea themselves.

The world that Columbus had heard about as being within the knowledge of men extended on the north to Iceland and Scandinavia, on the south to a cape one hundred miles south of the Equator, and to the east as far as China and Japan. North and South were not important to the spirit of that time; it was East and West that men thought of when they thought of the expansion and the discovery of the world. And although they admitted that the earth was a sphere, I think it likely that they imagined (although the imagination was contrary to their knowledge) that the line of West and East was far longer, and full of vaster possibilities, than that of North and South. North was familiar ground

to them—one voyage to England, another to Iceland, another to Scandinavia; there was nothing impossible about that. Southward was another matter; but even here there was no ambition to discover the limit of the world. It is an error continually made by the biographers of Columbus that the purpose of Prince Henry's explorations down the coast of Africa was to find a sea road to the West Indies by way of the East. It was nothing of the kind. There was no idea in the minds of the Portuguese of the land which Columbus discovered, and which we now know as the West Indies. Mr. Vignaud contends[1] that the confusion arose from the very loose way in which the term India was applied in the Middle Ages. Several Indias were recognised. There was an India beyond the Ganges; a Middle India between the Ganges and the Indus; and a Lesser India, in which were included Arabia, Abyssinia, and the countries about the Red Sea. These divisions were, however, quite vague, and varied in different periods. In the time of Columbus the word India meant the kingdom of Prester John, that fabulous monarch who had been the subject of persistent legends since the twelfth century; and it was this India to which the Portuguese sought a sea road. They had no idea of a barrier cape far to the south, the doubling of which would open a road for them to the west; nor were they, as Mr. Vignaud believes, trying to open a route for the spice trade with the Orient. They had no great spice trade, and did not seek

[1] H. Vignaud, *La Lettre et la Carte de Toscanelli*. Paris, 1901.

more; what they did seek was an extension of their ordinary trade with Guinea and the African coast. To the maritime world of the fifteenth century, then, the South as a geographical region and as a possible point of discovery had no attractions.

To the west stretched what was known as the Sea of Darkness, about which even the cool knowledge of the geographers and astronomers could not think steadily. Nothing was known about it, it did not lead anywhere, there were no people there, there was no trade in that direction. The tides of history and of life avoided it; only now and then some terrified mariner, blown far out of his course, came back with tales of sea monsters and enchanted disappearing islands, and shores that receded, and coasts upon which no one could make a landfall. The farthest land known to the west was the Azores; beyond that stretched a vague and impossible ocean of terror and darkness, of which the Arabian writer Xerif al Edrisi, whose countrymen were the sea-kings of the Middle Ages, wrote as follows:—

"The ocean encircles the ultimate bounds of the inhabited earth, and all beyond it is unknown. No one has been able to verify anything concerning it, on account of its difficult and perilous navigation, its great obscurity, its profound depth, and frequent tempests; through fear of its mighty fishes and its haughty winds; yet there are many islands in it, some peopled, others uninhabited. There is no mariner who dares to enter into its deep waters; or if any have done so, they have merely kept

along its coasts, fearful of departing from them. The waves of this ocean, although they roll as high as mountains, yet maintain themselves without breaking; for if they broke it would be impossible for a ship to plough them."

It is another illustration of the way in which discovery and imagination had hitherto gone by steps and not by flights, that geographical knowledge reached the islands of the Atlantic (none of which were at a very great distance from the coast of Europe or from each other) at a comparatively early date, and stopped there until in Columbus there was found a man with faith strong enough to make the long flight beyond them to the unknown West. And yet the philosophers, and later the cartographers, true to their instinct for this pedestrian kind of imagination, put mythical lands and islands to the westward of the known islands as though they were really trying to make a way, to sink stepping-stones into the deep sea that would lead their thoughts across the unknown space. In the Catalan map of the world, which was the standard example of cosmography in the early days of Columbus, most of these mythical islands are marked. There was the island of Antilia, which was placed in 25° 35′ W., and was said to have been discovered by Don Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings of Spain, who fled there after his defeat by the Moors. There was the island of the Seven Cities, which is sometimes identified with this Antilia, and was the object of a persistent belief or superstition on the part of the inhabitants

of the Canary Islands. They saw, or thought they saw, about ninety leagues to the westward, an island with high peaks and deep valleys. The vision was intermittent; it was only seen in very clear weather, on some of those pure, serene days of the tropics when in the clear atmosphere distant objects appear to be close at hand. In cloudy, and often in clear weather also, it was not to be seen at all; but the inhabitants of the Canaries, who always saw it in the same place, were so convinced of its reality that they petitioned the King of Portugal to allow them to go and take possession of it; and several expeditions were in fact despatched, but none ever came up with that fairy land. It was called the island of the Seven Cities from a legend of seven bishops who had fled from Spain at the time of the Moorish conquest, and, landing upon this island, had founded there seven splendid cities. There was the island of St. Brandan, called after the Saint who set out from Ireland in the sixth century in search of an island which always receded before his ships; this island was placed several hundred miles to the west of the Canaries on maps and charts throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There was the island of Brazil, to the west of Cape St. Vincent; the islands of Royllo, San Giorgio, and Isola di Mam; but they were all islands of dreams, seen by the eyes of many mariners in that imaginative time, but never trodden by any foot of man. To Columbus, however, and the mariners of his day, they were all real places, which a man might reach by special good fortune or heroism,

but which, all things considered, it was not quite worth the while of any man to attempt to reach. They have all disappeared from our charts, like the Atlantis of Plato, that was once charted to the westward of the Straits of Gibraltar, and of which the Canaries were believed to be the last peaks unsubmerged.

Sea myths and legends are strange things, and do not as a rule persist in the minds of men unless they have had some ghostly foundation; so it is possible that these fabled islands of the West were lands that had actually been seen by living eyes, although their position could never be properly laid down nor their identity assured. Of all the wandering seamen who talked in the way-side taverns of Atlantic seaports, some must have had strange tales to tell; tales which sometimes may have been true, but were never believed. Vague rumours hung about those shores, like spray and mist about a headland, of lands seen and lost again in the unknown and uncharted ocean. Doubtless the lamp of faith, the inner light, burned in some of these storm-tossed men; but all they had was a glimpse here and there, seen for a moment and lost again; not the clear sight of faith by which Columbus steered his westward course.

The actual outposts of western occupation, then, were the Azores, which were discovered by Genoese sailors in the pay of Portugal early in the fourteenth century; the Canaries, which had been continuously discovered

and rediscovered since the Phœnicians occupied them and Pliny chose them for his Hesperides; and Madeira, which is believed to have been discovered by an Englishman under the following very romantic and moving circumstances.

In the reign of Edward the Third a young man named Robert Machin fell in love with a beautiful girl, his superior in rank, Anne Dorset or d'Urfey by name. She loved him also, but her relations did not love him; and therefore they had Machin imprisoned upon some pretext or other, and forcibly married the young lady to a nobleman who had a castle on the shores of the Bristol Channel. The marriage being accomplished, and the girl carried away by her bridegroom to his seat in the West, it was thought safe to release Machin. Whereupon he collected several friends, and they followed the newly-married couple to Bristol and laid their plans for an abduction. One of the friends got himself engaged as a groom in the service of the unhappy bride, and found her love unchanged, and if possible increased by the present misery she was in. An escape was planned; and one day, when the girl and her groom were riding in the park, they set spurs to their horses, and galloped off to a place on the shores of the Bristol Channel where young Robert had a boat on the beach and a ship in the offing. They set sail immediately, intending to make for France, where the reunited lovers hoped to live happily; but it came on to blow when they were off the Lizard, and a southerly gale, which lasted for thirteen days, drove them far out of their course.

The bride, from her joy and relief, fell into a state of the gloomiest despondency, believing that the hand of God was turned against her, and that their love would never be enjoyed. The tempest fell on the fourteenth day, and at the break of morning the sea-worn company saw trees and land ahead of them. In the sunrise they landed upon an island full of noble trees, about which flights of singing birds were hovering, and in which the sweetest fruits, the most lovely flowers, and the purest and most limpid waters abounded. Machin and his bride and their friends made an encampment on a flowery meadow in a sheltered valley, where for three days they enjoyed the sweetness and rest of the shore and the companionship of all kinds of birds and beasts, which showed no signs of fear at their presence. On the third day a storm arose, and raged for a night over the island; and in the morning the adventurers found that their ship was nowhere to be seen. The despair of the little company was extreme, and was increased by the condition of poor Anne, upon whom terror and remorse again fell, and so preyed upon her mind that in three days she was dead. Her lover, who had braved so much and won her so gallantly, was turned to stone by this misfortune. Remorse and aching desolation oppressed him; from the moment of her death he scarcely ate nor spoke, and in five days he also was dead, surely of a broken heart. They buried him beside his mistress under a spreading tree, and put up a wooden cross there, with a prayer that any Christians who might come to

the island would build a chapel to Jesus the Saviour. The rest of the party then repaired their little boat and put to sea; were cast upon the coast of Morocco, captured by the Moors, and thrown into prison. With them in prison was a Spanish pilot named Juan de Morales, who listened attentively to all they could tell him about the situation and condition of the island, and who after his release communicated what he knew to Prince Henry of Portugal. The island of Madeira was thus rediscovered in 1418, and in 1425 was colonised by Prince Henry, who appointed as Governor Bartolomeo de Perestrello, whose daughter was afterwards to become the wife of Columbus.

So much for the outposts of the Old World. Of the New World, about the possibility of which Columbus is beginning to dream as he sails the Mediterranean, there was no knowledge and hardly any thought. Though new in the thoughts of Columbus, it was very old in itself; generations of men had lived and walked and spoken and toiled there, ever since men came upon the earth; sun and shower, the thrill of the seasons, birth and life and death, had been visiting it for centuries and centuries. And it is quite possible that, long before even the civilisation that produced Columbus was in its dawn, men from the Old World had journeyed there. There are two very old fragments of knowledge which indicate at least the possibility of a Western World of which the ancients had knowledge. There is a fragment, preserved from the fourth century before Christ, of a conversation

between Silenus and Midas, King of Phrygia, in which Silenus correctly describes the Old World—Europe, Asia, and Africa—as being surrounded by the sea, but also describes, far to the west of it, a huge island, which had its own civilisation and its own laws, where the animals and the men were of twice our stature, and lived for twice our years. There is also the story told by Plato of the island of Atlantis, which was larger than Africa and Asia together, and which in an earthquake disappeared beneath the waves, producing such a slime upon the surface that no ship was able to navigate the sea in that place. This is the story which the priests of Sais told to Solon, and which was embodied in the sacred inscriptions in their temples. It is strange that any one should think of this theory of the slime who had not seen or heard of the Sargasso Sea—that great bank of floating seaweed that the ocean currents collect and retain in the middle of the basin of the North Atlantic.

The Egyptians, the Tartars, the Canaanites, the Chinese, the Arabians, the Welsh, and the Scandinavians have all been credited with the colonisation of America; but the only race from the Old World which had almost certainly been there were the Scandinavians. In the year 983 the coast of Greenland was visited by Eric the Red, the son of a Norwegian noble, who was banished for the crime of murder. Some fifteen years later Eric's son Lief made an expedition with thirty-five men and a ship in the direction of the new land. They came to a coast where there were nothing but ice mountains having the

appearance of slate; this country they named Helluland—that is, Land of Slate. This country is our Newfoundland. Standing out to sea again, they reached a level wooded country with white sandy cliffs, which they called Markland, or Land of Wood, which is our Nova Scotia. Next they reached an island east of Markland, where they passed the winter, and as one of their number who had wandered some distance inland had found vines and grapes, Lief named the country Vinland or Vine Land, which is the country we call New England. The Scandinavians continued to make voyages to the West and South; and finally Thorfinn Karlsefne, an Icelander, made a great expedition in the spring of 1007 with ships and material for colonisation. He made much progress to the southwards, and the Icelandic accounts of the climate and soil and characteristics of the country leave no doubt that Greenland and Nova Scotia were discovered and colonised at this time.

It must be remembered, however, that then and in the lifetime of Columbus Greenland was supposed to be a promontory of the coast of Europe, and was not connected in men's minds with a western continent. Its early discovery has no bearing on the significance of Columbus's achievement, the greatness of which depends not on his having been the first man from the Old World to set foot upon the shores of the New, but on the fact that by pure faith and belief in his own purpose he did set out for and arrive in a world where no man of his era or civilisation had ever before set

foot, or from which no wanderer who may have been blown there ever returned. It is enough to claim for him the merit of discovery in the true sense of the word. The New World was covered from the Old by a veil of distance, of time and space, of absence, invisibility, virtual non-existence; and he discovered it.

CHAPTER VI

IN PORTUGAL

THERE is no reason to believe that before his twenty-fifth year Columbus was anything more than a merchant or mariner, sailing before the mast, and joining one ship after another as opportunities for good voyages offered themselves. A change took place later, probably after his marriage, when he began to adapt himself rapidly to a new set of surroundings, and to show his intrinsic qualities; but all the attempts that have been made to glorify him socially —attempts, it must be remembered, in which he himself and his sons were in after years the leaders—are entirely mistaken. That strange instinct for consistency which makes people desire to see the outward man correspond, in terms of momentary and arbitrary credit, with the inner and hidden man of the heart, has in truth led to more biographical injustice than is fully realised. If Columbus had been the man some of his biographers would like to make him out—the nephew or descendant of a famous French Admiral, educated at the University of Pavia, belonging to a family of noble birth and high social esteem in Genoa, chosen by King Réné to be the commander of naval expeditions, learned in scientific lore,

in the classics, in astronomy and in cosmography, the friend and correspondent of Toscanelli and other learned scientists—we should find it hard indeed to forgive him the shifts and deceits that he practised. It is far more interesting to think of him as a common craftsman, of a lowly condition and poor circumstances, who had to earn his living during the formative period of his life by the simplest and hardest labour of the hand. The qualities that made him what he was were of a very simple kind, and his character owed its strength, not to any complexity or subtlety of training and education, but rather to that very bareness and simplicity of circumstance that made him a man of single rather than manifold ideas. He was not capable of seeing both sides of a question; he saw only one side. But he came of a great race; and it was the qualities of his race, combined with this simplicity and even perhaps vacancy of mind, that gave to his idea, when once the seed of it had lodged in his mind, so much vigour in growth and room for expansion. Think of him, then, at the age of twenty-five as a typical plebeian Genoese, bearing all the characteristic traits of his century and people—the spirit of adventure, the love of gold and of power, a spirit of mysticism, and more than a touch of crafty and elaborate dissimulation, when that should be necessary.

He had been at sea for ten or eleven years, making voyages to and from Genoa, with an occasional spell ashore and plunge into the paternal affairs, when in the year 1476 he found himself on board a Genoese vessel

which formed one of a convoy going to Lisbon. This convoy was attacked off Cape St. Vincent by Colombo, or Colomb, the famous French corsair, of whom Christopher himself has quite falsely been called a relative. Only two of the Genoese vessels escaped, and one of these two was the ship which carried Columbus. It arrived at Lisbon, where Columbus went ashore and took up his abode.

This, so far as can be ascertained, is the truth about the arrival of Columbus in Portugal. The early years of an obscure man who leaps into fame late in life are nearly always difficult to gather knowledge about, because not only are the annals of the poor short and simple and in most cases altogether unrecorded, but there is always that instinct, to which I have already referred, to make out that the circumstances of a man who late in life becomes great and remarkable were always, at every point in his career, remarkable also. We love to trace the hand of destiny guiding her chosen people, protecting them from dangers, and preserving them for their great moment. It is a pleasant study, and one to which the facts often lend themselves, but it leads to a vicious method of biography which obscures the truth with legends and pretences that have afterwards laboriously to be cleared away. It was so in the case of Columbus. Before his departure on his first voyage of discovery there is absolutely no temporary record of him except a few dates in notarial registers. The circumstances of his life and his previous conditions were supplied after-

wards by himself and his contemporaries; and both he and they saw the past in the light of the present, and did their best to make it fit a present so wonderful and miraculous. The whole trend of recent research on the subject of Columbus has been unfortunately in the direction of proving the complete insincerity of his own speech and writings about his early life, and the inaccuracy of Las Casas, his contemporary biographer, and the first historian of the West Indies. Those of my readers, then, who are inclined to be impatient with the meagreness of the facts with which I am presenting them, and the disproportionate amount of theory to fact with regard to these early years of Columbus, must remember three things. First, that the only record of the early years of Columbus was written long after those years had passed away, and in circumstances which did not harmonise with them; second, that there is evidence, both substantive and presumptive, that much of those records, even though it came from the hands of Columbus and his friends, is false and must be discarded; and third, that the only way in which anything like the truth can be arrived at is by circumstantial and presumptive evidence with regard to dates, names, places, and events upon which the obscure life of Columbus impinged. Columbus is known to have written much about himself, but very little of it exists or remains in his own handwriting. It remains in the form of quotation by others, all of whom had their reasons for not representing quite accurately what was, it must be feared, not even itself a candid

and accurate record. The evidence for these very serious statements is the subject of numberless volumes and monographs, which cannot be quoted here; for it is my privilege to reap the results, and not to reproduce the material, of the immense research and investigation to which in the last fifty years the life of Columbus has been subjected.

We shall come to facts enough presently; in the meantime we have but the vaguest knowledge of what Columbus did in Lisbon. The one technical possession which he obviously had was knowledge of the sea; he had also a head on his shoulders, and plenty of judgment and common sense; he had likely picked up some knowledge of cartography in his years at Genoa, since (having abandoned wool-weaving) he probably wished to make progress in the profession of the sea; and it is, therefore, believed that he picked up a living in Lisbon by drawing charts and maps. Such a living would only be intermittent; a fact that is indicated by his periodic excursions to sea again, presumably when funds were exhausted. There were other Genoese in Lisbon, and his own brother Bartholomew was with him there for a time. He may actually have been there when Columbus arrived, but it was more probable that Columbus, the pioneer of the family, seeing a better field for his brother's talent in Lisbon than in Genoa, sent for him when he himself was established there. This Bartholomew, of whom we

shall see a good deal in the future, is merely an outline at this stage of the story; an outline that will later be filled up with human features and fitted with a human character; at present he is but a brother of Christopher, with a rather bookish taste, a better knowledge of cartography than Christopher possessed, and some little experience of the book-selling trade. He too made charts in Lisbon, and sold books also, and no doubt between them the efforts of the brothers, supplemented by the occasional voyages of Christopher, obtained them a sufficient livelihood. The social change, in the one case from the society of Genoese wool-weavers, and in the other from the company of merchant sailors, must have been very great; for there is evidence that they began to make friends and acquaintances among a rather different class than had been formerly accessible to them. The change to a new country also and to a new language makes a deep impression at the age of twenty-five; and although Columbus in his sea-farings had been in many ports, and had probably picked up a knowledge both of Portuguese and of Spanish, his establishment in the Portuguese capital could not fail to enlarge his outlook upon life.

There is absolutely no record of his circumstances in the first year of his life at Lisbon, so we may look once more into the glass of imagination and try to find a picture there. It is very dim, very minute, very, very far away. There is the little shop in a steep Lisbon street, somewhere near the harbour we may be sure, with the

shadows of the houses lying sharp on the white sunlight of the street; the cool darkness of the shop, with its odour of vellum and parchment, its rolls of maps and charts; and somewhere near by the sounds and commotion of the wharves and the shipping. Often, when there was a purchaser in the shop, there would be talk of the sea, of the best course from this place to that, of the entrance to this harbour and the other; talk of the western islands too, of the western ocean, of the new astrolabe which the German Müller of Königsberg, or Regiomontanus, as they called him in Portugal, had modified and improved. And if there was sometimes an evening walk, it would surely be towards the coast or on a hill above the harbour, with a view of the sun being quenched in the sea and travelling down into the unknown, uncharted West.

CHAPTER VII

ADVENTURES BODILY AND SPIRITUAL

COLUMBUS had not been long in Portugal before he was off again to sea, this time on a longer voyage than any he had yet undertaken. Our knowledge of it depends on his own words as reported by Las Casas, and, like so much other knowledge similarly recorded, is not to be received with absolute certainty; but on the whole the balance of probability is in favour of its truth. The words in which this voyage is recorded are given as a quotation from a letter of Columbus, and, stripped of certain obvious interpolations of the historian, are as follows:—"In the month of February, and in the year 1477, I navigated as far as the island of Tile [Thule], a hundred leagues; and to this island, which is as large as England, the English, especially those of Bristol, go with merchandise; and when I was there the sea was not frozen over, although there were very high tides, so much so that in some parts the sea rose twenty-five *brazas*, and went down as much, twice during the day."[1] The reasons for doubting that this voyage took place are due simply to Columbus's habit of being untruthful in regard to his

[1] *Hist. del Almirante*, cap. 4.

own past doings, and his propensity for drawing the long bow; and the reason that has been accepted by most of his biographers who have denied the truth of this statement is that, in the year 1492, when Columbus was addressing the King and Queen of Spain on his qualifications as a navigator, and when he wished to set forth his experience in a formidable light, he said nothing about this voyage, but merely described his explorations as having extended from Guinea on the south to England on the north. A shrewd estimate of Columbus's character makes it indeed seem incredible that, if he had really been in Iceland, he should not have mentioned the fact on this occasion; and yet there is just one reason, also quite characteristic of Columbus, that would account for the suppression. It is just possible that when he was at Thule, by which he meant Iceland, he may have heard of the explorations in the direction of Greenland and Newfoundland; and that, although by other navigators these lands were regarded as a part of the continent of Europe, he may have had some glimmerings of an idea that they were part of land and islands in the West; and he was much too jealous of his own reputation as the great and only originator of the project for voyaging to the West, to give away any hints that he was not the only person to whom such ideas had occurred. There is deception and untruth somewhere; and one must make one's choice between regarding the story in the first place as a lie, or accepting it as truth, and putting down Columbus's silence about it on a

later occasion to a rare instinct of judicious suppression. There are other facts in his life, to which we shall come later, that are in accordance with this theory. There is no doubt, moreover, that Columbus had a very great experience of the sea, and was one of the greatest practical seamen, if not the greatest, that has ever lived; and it would be foolish to deny, except for the greatest reasons, that he made a voyage to the far North, which was neither unusual at the time nor a very great achievement for a seaman of his experience.

Christopher returned from these voyages, of which we know nothing except the facts that he has given us, towards the end of 1477; and it was probably in the next year that an event very important in his life and career took place. Hitherto there has been no whisper of love n that arduous career of wool-weaving, sailoring, and imap-making; and it is not unlikely that his marriage represents the first inspiration of love in his life, for he was, in spite of his southern birth, a cool-blooded man, for whom affairs of the heart had never a very serious interest. But at Lisbon, where he began to find himself with some footing and place in the world, and where the prospect of at least a livelihood began to open out before him, his thoughts took that turn towards domesticity and family life which marks a moment in the development of almost every man. And now, since he has at last to emerge from the misty environment of sea-spray that has veiled him so long from our intimate sight, we may take a close look at him as he was in this year 1478.

Unlike the southern Italians, he was fair in colouring, a man rather above the middle height, large limbed, of a shapely breadth and proportion, and of a grave and dignified demeanour. His face was ruddy, and inclined to be freckled under the exposure to the sun, his hair at this age still fair and reddish, although in a few years later it turned grey, and became white while he was still a young man. His nose was slightly aquiline, his face long and rather full; his eyes of a clear blue, with sharply defined eyebrows—seamen's eyes, which get an unmistakable light in them from long staring into the sea distances. Altogether a handsome and distinguished-looking young man, noticeable anywhere, and especially among a crowd of swarthy Portuguese. He was not a lively young man; on the contrary, his manner was rather heavy, and even at times inclined to be pompous; he had a very good opinion of himself, had the clear calculating head and tidy intellectual methods of the able mariner; was shrewd and cautious—in a word, took himself and the world very seriously. A strictly conventional man, as the conventions of his time and race went; probably some of his gayer and lighter-hearted contemporaries thought him a dull enough dog, who would not join in a carouse or a gallant adventure, but would probably get the better of you if he could in any commercial deal. He was a great stickler for the observances of religion; and never a Sunday or feast-day passed, when he was ashore, without finding him, like the dutiful son of the Church that he was, hearing Mass and attending at Bene-

diction. Not, indeed, a very attractive or inspiring figure of a man; not the man whose company one would likely have sought very much, or whose conversation one would have found very interesting. A man rather whose character was cast in a large and plain mould, without those many facets which add so much to the brightness of human intercourse, and which attract and reflect the light from other minds; a man who must be tried in large circumstances, and placed in a big setting, if his qualities are to be seen to advantage. . . . I seem to see him walking up from the shop near the harbour at Lisbon towards the convent of Saints; walking gravely and firmly, with a dignified demeanour, with his best clothes on, and glad, for the moment, to be free of his sea acquaintances, and to be walking in the direction of that upper-class world after which he has a secret hankering in his heart. There are a great many churches in Lisbon nearer his house where he might hear Mass on Sundays; but he prefers to walk up to the rich and fashionable convent of Saints, where everybody is well dressed, and where those kindling eyes of his may indulge a cool taste for feminine beauty.

While the chapel bell is ringing other people are hurrying through the sunny Lisbon streets to Mass at the convent. Among the fashionable throng are two ladies, one young, one middle-aged; they separate at the church door, and the younger one leaves her mother and takes

her place in the convent choir. This is Philippa Moñiz, who lives alone with her mother in Lisbon, and amuses herself with her privileges as a *cavaliera*, or dame, in one of the knightly orders attached to the rich convent of Saints. Perhaps she has noticed the tall figure of the young Genoese in the strangers' part of the convent, perhaps not; but his roving blue eye has noticed her, and much is to come of it. The young Genoese continues his regular and exemplary attendance at the divine Office, the young lady is zealous in observing her duties in the choir; some kind friend introduces them; the audacious young man makes his proposals, and, in spite of the melancholy protests of the young lady's exceedingly respectable and highly-connected relatives, the young people are betrothed and actually married before the elders have time to recover breath from their first shock at the absurdity of the suggestion.

There is a very curious fact in connection with his marriage that is worthy of our consideration. In all his voluminous writings, letters, memoirs, and journals, Columbus never once mentions his wife. His sole reference to her is in his will, made at Valladolid many years later, long after her death; and is contained in the two words "my wife." He ordains that a chapel shall be erected and masses said for the repose of the souls of his father, his mother, and his wife. He who wrote so much, did not write of her; he who boasted so much, never boasted of her; he who bemoaned so much, never bemoaned her. There is a blank silence on his part

about everything connected with his marriage and his wife. I like to think that it was because this marriage, which incidentally furnished him with one of the great impulses of his career, was in itself placid and uneventful, and belongs to that mass of happy days that do not make history. Columbus was not a passionate man. I think that love had a very small place in his life, and that the fever of passion was with him brief and soon finished with; but I am sure he was affectionate, and grateful for any affection and tenderness that were bestowed upon him. He was much away too, at first on his voyages to Guinea and afterwards on the business of his petitions to the Portuguese and Spanish Courts; and one need not be a cynic to believe that these absences did nothing to lessen the affection between him and his wife. Finally, their married life was a short one; she died within ten years, and I am sure did not outlive his affections; so that there may be something solemn, some secret memories of the aching joy and sorrow that her coming into his life and passing out of it brought him, in this silence of Columbus concerning his wife.

This marriage was, in the vulgar idiom of to-day, a great thing for Columbus. It not only brought him a wife; it brought him a home, society, recognition, and a connection with maritime knowledge and adventure that was of the greatest importance to him. Philippa Moñiz Perestrello was the daughter of Bartolomeo Perestrello,

who had been appointed hereditary governor of the island of Porto Santo on its colonisation by Prince Henry in 1425 and who had died there in 1457. Her grandfather was Gil Ayres Moñiz, who was secretary to the famous Constable Pereira in the reign of John I., and is chiefly interesting to us because he founded the chapel of the "Piedad" in the Carmelite Monastery at Lisbon, in which the Moñiz family had the right of interment for ever, and in which the body of Philippa, after her brief pilgrimage in this world was over, duly rested; and whence her son ordered its disinterment and re-burial in the church of Santa Clara in San Domingo. Philippa's mother, Isabel Moñiz, was the second or third wife of Perestrello; and after her husband's death she had come to live in Lisbon. She had another daughter, Violante by name, who had married one Mulier, or Muliartes, in Huelva; and a son named Bartolomeo, who was the heir to the governorship of Porto Santo; but as he was only a little boy at the time of his father's death his mother ceded the governorship to Pedro Correa da Cunha, who had married Iseult, the daughter of old Bartolomeo by his first wife. The governorship was thus kept in the family during the minority of Bartolomeo, who resumed it later when he came of age.

This Isabel, mother of Philippa, was a very important acquaintance indeed for Columbus. It must be noted that he left the shop and poor Bartholomew to take care of themselves or each other, and went to live in the house of his mother-in-law. This was a great social step for the

wool-weaver of Genoa; and it was probably the result of a kind of compromise with his wife's horrified relatives at the time of her marriage. It was doubtless thought impossible for her to go and live over the chart-maker's shop; and as you can make charts in one house as well as another, it was decided that Columbus should live with his mother-in-law, and follow his trade under her roof. Columbus, in fact, seems to have been fortunate in securing the favour of his female relatives-in-law, and it was probably owing to the championship of Philippa's mother that a marriage so much to his advantage ever took place at all. His wife had many distinguished relatives in the neighbourhood of Lisbon; her cousin was archbishop at this very time; but I can neither find that their marriage was celebrated with the archiepiscopal blessing or that he ever got much help or countenance from the male members of the Moñiz family. Archbishops even to-day do not much like their pretty cousins marrying a man of Columbus's position, whether you call him a wool-weaver, a sailor, a map-maker, or a book-seller. "Adventurer" is perhaps the truest description of him; and the word was as much distrusted in the best circles in Lisbon in the fifteenth century as it is to-day.

Those of his new relatives, however, who did get to know him soon began to see that Philippa had not made such a bad bargain after all. With the confidence and added belief in himself that the recognition and encouragement of those kind women brought him, Columbus's mind

and imagination expanded; and I think it was probably now that he began to wonder if all his knowledge and seamanship, his quite useful smattering of cartography and cosmography, his real love of adventure, and all his dreams and speculations concerning the unknown and uncharted seas, could not be turned to some practical account. His wife's step-sister Iseult and her husband had, moreover, only lately returned to Lisbon from their long residence in Porto Santo; young Bartolomeo Perestrello, her brother, was reigning there in their stead, and no doubt sending home interesting accounts of ships and navigators that put in at Madeira; and all the circumstances would tend to fan the spark of Columbus's desire to have some adventure and glory of his own on the high seas. He would wish to show all these grandees, with whom his marriage had brought him acquainted, that you did not need to be born a Perestrello—or Pallastrelli, as the name was in its original Italian form—to make a name in the world. Donna Isabel, moreover, was never tired of talking about Porto Santo and her dead husband, and of all the voyages and sea adventures that had filled his life. She was obviously a good teller of tales, and had all the old history and traditions of Madeira at her fingers' ends; the story of Robert Machin and Anne Dorset; the story of the isle of Seven Cities; and the black cloud on the horizon that turned out in the end to be Madeira. She told Christopher how her husband, when he had first gone to Porto Santo, had taken there a litter of rabbits, and how the rabbits had so increased that in

two seasons they had eaten up everything on the island, and rendered it uninhabitable for some time.

She brought out her husband's sea-charts, memoranda, and log-books, the sight of which still farther inflamed Christopher's curiosity and ambition. The great thing in those days was to discover something, if it was only a cape down the African coast or a rock in the Atlantic. The key to fame, which later took the form of mechanical invention, and later still of discovery in the region of science, took the form then of actual discovery of parts of the earth's surface. The thing was in the air; news was coming in every day of something new seen, something new charted. If others had done so much, and the field was still half unexplored, could not he do something also? It was not an unlikely thought to occur to the mind of a student of sea charts and horizons.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRE KINDLES

THE next step in Columbus's career was a move to Porto Santo, which probably took place very soon after his marriage—that is to say, in the year 1479. It is likely that he had the chance of making a voyage there; perhaps even of commanding a ship, for his experience of the sea and skill as a navigator must by this time have raised him above the rank of an ordinary seaman; and in that case nothing would be more natural than that he should take his young wife with him to visit her brother Bartolomeo, and to see the family property. It is one of the charms of the seaman's profession that he travels free all over the world; and if he has no house or other fixed possessions that need to be looked after he has the freedom of the world, and can go where he likes free of cost. Porto Santo and Madeira, lying in the track of the busiest trade on the Atlantic coast, would provide Columbus with an excellent base from which to make other voyages; so it was probably with a heart full of eager anticipation for the future, and sense of quiet happiness in the present, that in the year 1479 Signor Cristoforo Colombo (for he did not yet call himself Señor Cristoval Colon) set

out for Porto Santo—a lonely rock some miles north of Madeira. Its southern shore is a long sweeping bay of white sand, with a huddle of sand-hills beyond, and cliffs and peaks of basalt streaked with lava fringing the other shores. When Columbus and his bride arrived there the place was almost as bare as it is to-day. There were the governor's house; the settlement of Portuguese who worked in the mills and sugar-fields; the mills themselves, with the cultivated sugar-fields behind them; and the vineyards, with the dwarf Malmsey vines pegged down to the ground, which Prince Henry had imported from Candia fifty years before. The forest of dragon-trees that had once covered the island was nearly all gone. The wood had all been used either for building, making boats, or for fuel; and on the fruit of the few trees that were left a herd of pigs was fattened. There was frequent communication by boat with Madeira, which was the chief of all the Atlantic islands, and the head-quarters of the sugar trade; and Porto Santo itself was a favourite place of call for passing ships. So that it was by no means lonely for Christopher Columbus and his wife, even if they had not had the society of the governor and his settlement.

We can allow him about three years in Porto Santo, although for a part of this time at least he must have been at sea. I think it not unlikely that it was the happiest time of his life. He was removed from the

uncomfortable environment of people who looked down upon him because of his obscure birth; he was in an exquisite climate, and living by the sea-shore, as a sailor loves to do; he got on well with Bartolomeo, who was no doubt glad enough of the company of this grave sailor who had seen so much and had visited so many countries; above all he had his wife there, his beautiful, dear, proud Philippa, all to himself, and out of reach of those abominable Portuguese noblemen who paid so much attention to her and so little to him, and made him so jealous; and there was a whispered promise of some one who was coming to make him happier still. It is a splendid setting, this, for the sea adventurer; a charming picture that one has of him there so long ago, walking on the white shores of the great sweeping bay, with the glorious purple Atlantic sparkling and thundering on the sands, as it sparkles and thunders to-day. A place empty and vivid, swept by the mellow winds; silent, but for the continuous roar of the sea; still, but for the scuttling of the rabbits among the sand-hills and the occasional passage of a figure from the mills up to the sugar-fields; but brilliant with sunshine and colour and the bright environment of the sea. It was upon such scenes that he looked during this happy pause in his life; they were the setting of Philippa's dreams and anxieties as the time of motherhood drew near; and it was upon them that their little son first opened his eyes, and with the boom of the Atlantic breakers that he first mingled his small voice.

It is but a moment of rest and happiness; for Christopher the scene is soon changed, and he must set forth upon a voyage again, while Philippa is left, with a new light in her eyes, to watch over the atom that wakes and weeps and twists and struggles and mews, and sleeps again, in her charge. Sleep well, little son! Yet a little while, and you too shall make voyages and conquests; new worlds lie waiting for you, who are so greatly astonished at this Old World; far journeys by land and sea, and the company of courtiers and kings; and much honour from the name and deeds of him who looked into your eyes with a laugh and a sob, and was so very large and overshadowing! But with her who quietly sings to you, whose hands soothe and caress you, in whose eyes shines that wonderful light of mother's love—only a little while longer.

While Diego, as this son was christened, was yet only a baby in his cradle, Columbus made an important voyage to the coast of Guinea, as all the western part of the African continent was then called. His solid and practical qualities were by this time beginning to be recognised even by Philippa's haughty family, and it was possibly through the interest of her uncle, Pedro Noronhas, a distinguished minister of the King of Portugal, that he got the command of a caravel in the expedition which set out for Guinea in December 1481. A few miles from Cape Coast Castle, and on the borders of the Dutch

colony, there are to-day the ruined remains of a fort; and it is this fort, the fortress of St. George, that the expedition was sent out to erect. On the 11th of December the little fleet set sail for Lisbon—ten caravels, and two barges or lighters laden with the necessary masonry and timber-work for the fort. Columbus was in command of one of the caravels, and the whole fleet was commanded by the Portuguese Admiral Azumbaga. They would certainly see Porto Santo and Madeira on their way south, although they did not call there; and Philippa was no doubt looking out for them, and watching from the sand-hills the fleet of twelve ships going by in the offing. They called at Cape Verde, where the Admiral was commissioned to present one of the negro kings with some horses and hawks, and incidentally to obtain his assent to a treaty. On the 19th of January 1482, having made a very good voyage, they landed just beyond the Cape of the Three Points, and immediately set about the business of the expedition.

There was a state reception, with Admiral Azumbaga walking in front in scarlet and brocade, followed by his captains, Columbus among them, dressed in gorgeous tunics and cloaks with golden collars and, well hidden beneath their finery, good serviceable cuirasses. The banner of Portugal was ceremoniously unfurled and displayed from the top of a tall tree. An altar was erected and consecrated by the chaplain to the expedition, and a mass was sung for the repose of the soul of Prince Henry. The Portugal contingent were then met by Cara-

mansa, the king of the country, who came surrounded by a great guard of blacks armed with assegais, their bodies scantily decorated with monkey fur and palm leaves. The black monarch must have presented a handsome appearance, for his arms and legs were decked with gold bracelets and rings, he had a kind of dog-collar fitted with bells round his neck, and some pieces of gold were daintily twisted into his beard. With these aids to diplomacy, and doubtless also with the help of a dram or two of spirits or of the wine of Oporto, the treaty was soon concluded, and a very shrewd stroke of business accomplished for the King of Portugal; for it gave him the sole right of exchanging gaudy rubbish from Portugal for the precious gold of Ethiopia. When the contents of the two freight-ships had been unloaded they were beached and broken up by the orders of King John, who wished it to be thought that they had been destroyed in the whirlpools of that dangerous sea, and that the navigation of those rough waters was only safe for the caravels of the Navy. The fort was built in twenty days, and the expedition returned, laden with gold and ivory; Admiral Azumbaga remained behind in command of the garrison.

This voyage, which was a bold and adventurous one for the time, may be regarded as the first recognition of Columbus as a man of importance, for the expedition was manned and commanded by picked men; so it was for all reasons a very fortunate one for him, although the possession of the dangerous secret as to the where-

abouts of this valuable territory might have proved to be not very convenient to him in the future.

Columbus went back to Porto Santo with his ambitions thoroughly kindled. He had been given a definite command in the Portuguese Navy; he had been sailing with a fleet; he had been down to the mysterious coast of Africa; he had been trafficking with strange tribes; he had been engaged in a difficult piece of navigation such as he loved; and on the long dreamy days of the voyage home, the caravels furrowing the blue Atlantic before the steady trade-wind, he determined that he would find some way of putting his knowledge to use, and of earning distinction for himself. Living, as he had been lately, in Atlantic seaports overlooking the western ocean, it is certain that the idea of discovering something in that direction occupied him more and more. What it was that he was to discover was probably very vague in his mind, and was likely not designated by any name more exact than "lands." In after years he tried to show that it was a logical and scientific deduction which led him to go and seek the eastern shore of the Indian continent by sailing west; but we may be almost certain that at this time he thought of no such thing. He had no exact scientific knowledge at this date. His map-making had taught him something, and naturally he had kept his ears open, and knew all the gossip and hearsay about the islands of the West; and there gradually grew

in his mind the intuition or conviction—I refuse to call it an opinion—that, over that blue verge of the West, there was land to be found. How this seed of conviction first lodged in his mind it would be impossible to say; in any one of the steps through which we have followed him, it might have taken its root; but there it was, beginning to occupy his mind very seriously indeed; and he began to look out, as all men do who wish to act upon faith or conviction which they cannot demonstrate to another person, for some proofs that his conviction was a sound one.

And now, just at the moment when he needs it most, comes an incident that, to a man of his religious and superstitious habit, seems like the pointing finger of Providence. The story of the shipwrecked pilot has been discredited by nearly all the modern biographers of Columbus, chiefly because it does not fit in with their theory of his scientific studies and the alleged bearing of these on his great discovery; but it is given by Las Casas, who says that it was commonly believed by Columbus's *entourage* at Hispaniola. Moreover, amid all the tangles of theory and argument in which the achievement of Columbus has been involved, this original story of shipwrecked mariners stands out with a strength and simplicity that cannot be entirely disregarded by the historian who permits himself some light of imagination by which to work. It is more true to life and to nature that Columbus should have received his last impulse, the little push that was to set his accumulated energy and

determination in motion, from a thing of pure chance, than that he should have built his achievement up in a logical superstructure resting on a basis of profound and elaborate theory.

In the year following Columbus's return from Guinea, then, he, and probably his family, had gone over to Madeira from Porto Santo, and were staying there. While they were there a small ship put in to Madeira, much battered by storms and bad weather, and manned by a crew of five sick mariners. Columbus, who was probably never far from the shore at Funchal when a ship came into the harbour, happened to see them. Struck by their appearance, and finding them in a quite destitute and grievously invalid condition, he entertained them in his house until some other provision could be made for them. But they were quite worn out. One by one they succumbed to weakness and illness, until one only, a pilot from Huelva, was left. He also was sinking, and when it was obvious that his end was near at hand, he beckoned his good host to his bedside, and, in gratitude for all his kindness, imparted to him some singular knowledge which he had acquired, and with which, if he had lived, he had hoped to win distinction for himself.

The pilot's story, in so far as it has been preserved, and taking the mean of four contemporary accounts of it, was as follows. This man, whose name is doubtful, but is given as Alonso Sánchez, was sailing on a voyage from one of the Spanish ports to England or Flanders. He had a crew of seventeen men. When they had got

well out to sea a severe easterly gale sprung up, which drove the vessel before it to the westward. Day after day and week after week, for twenty-eight days, this gale continued. The islands were all left far behind, and the ship was carried into a region far beyond the limits of the ocean marked on the charts. At last they sighted some islands, upon one of which they landed and took in wood and water. The pilot took the bearings of the island, in so far as he was able, and made some observations, the only one of which that has remained being that the natives went naked; and, the wind having changed, set forth on his homeward voyage. This voyage was long and painful. The wind did not hold steady from the west; the pilot and his crew had a very hazy notion of where they were; their dead reckoning was confused; their provisions fell short; and one by one the crew sickened and died until they were reduced to five or six—the ones who, worn out by sickness and famine, and the labours of working the ship short-handed and in their enfeebled condition, at last made the island of Madeira, and cast anchor in the beautiful bay of Funchal, only to die there. All these things we may imagine the dying man relating in snatches to his absorbed listener, who felt himself to be receiving a pearl of knowledge to be guarded and used, now that its finder must depart upon the last and longest voyage of human discovery. Such observations as he had made—probably a few figures giving the bearings of stars, an account of dead reckoning, and a quite useless and inaccurate chart or map—the pilot

gave to his host; then, having delivered his soul of its secret, he died.

This is the story; not an impossible or improbable one in its main outlines. Whether the pilot really landed on one of the Antilles is extremely doubtful, although it is possible. Superstitious and storm-tossed sailors in those days were only too ready to believe that they saw some of the fabled islands of the Atlantic; and it is quite possible that the pilot simply announced that he had seen land, and that the details as to his having actually set foot upon it were added later. That does not seem to me important in so far as it concerns Columbus. Whether it were true or not, the man obviously believed it; and to the mind of Columbus, possessed with an idea and a blind faith in something which could not be seen, the whole incident would appear in the light of a supernatural sign. The bit of paper or parchment with the rude drawing on it, even although it were the drawing of a thing imagined and not of a thing seen, would still have for him a kind of authority that he would find it hard to ignore.

It seems unnecessary to disbelieve this story. It is obviously absurd to regard it as the sole origin of Columbus's great idea; it probably belongs to that order of accidents, small and unimportant in themselves, which are so often associated with the beginnings of mighty events.

Walking on the shore at Madeira or Porto Santo, his mind brooding on the great and growing idea,

Columbus would remember one or two other instances which, in the light of his growing conviction and knowledge, began to take on a significant hue. He remembered that his wife's relative, Pedro Correa, who had come back from Porto Santo while Columbus was living in Lisbon, had told him about some strange flotsam that came in upon the shores of the island. He had seen a piece of wood of a very dark colour curiously carved, but not with any tool of metal; and some great canes had also come ashore, so big that every joint would hold a gallon of wine. These canes, which were utterly unlike anything known in Europe or the islands of the Atlantic, had been looked upon as such curiosities that they had been sent to the King at Lisbon, where they remained, and where Columbus himself afterwards saw them. Two other stories, which he heard also at this time, went to strengthen his convictions. One was the tale of Martin Vincenti, a pilot in the Portuguese Navy, who had found in the sea, four hundred and twenty leagues to the west of Cape St. Vincent, another piece of wood, curiously carved, that had evidently not been laboured with an iron instrument. Columbus also remembered that the inhabitants of the Azores had more than once found upon their coasts the trunks of huge pine-trees, and strangely-shaped canoes carved out of single logs; and, most significant of all, the people of Flores had taken from the water the bodies of two dead men, whose faces were of a strange broad shape, and whose features differed from those of any known race of mankind. All these

objects, it was supposed, were brought by westerly winds to the shores of Europe; it was not till long afterwards, when the currents of the Atlantic came to be studied, that the presence of such flotsam came to be attributed to the ocean currents, deflected by the Cape of Good Hope and gathered in the Gulf of Mexico, which are sprayed out across the Atlantic.

The idea once fixed in his mind that there was land at a not impossible distance to the west, and perhaps a sea-road to the shores of Asia itself, the next thing to be done was to go and discover it. Rather a formidable task for a man without money, a foreigner in a strange land, among people who looked down upon him because of his obscure birth, and with no equipment except a knowledge of the sea, a great mastery of the art and craft of seamanship, a fearless spirit of adventure, and an inner light! Some one else would have to be convinced before anything could be done; somebody who would provide ships and men and money and provisions. Altogether rather a large order; for it was not an unusual thing in those days for master mariners, tired of the shore, to suggest to some grandee or other the desirability of fitting out a ship or two to go in search of the isle of St. Brandan, or to look up Antilia, or the island of the Seven Cities. It was very hard to get an audience even for such a reasonable scheme as that; but to suggest taking a flotilla straight out to the west and into the Sea of Darkness, down that curving hill of the sea which it might be easy enough to slide down, but up which it

was known that no ship could ever climb again, was a thing that hardly any serious or well-informed person would listen to. A young man from Genoa, without a knowledge either of the classics or of the Fathers, and with no other argument except his own fixed belief and some vague talk about bits of wood and shipwrecked mariners, was not the person to inspire the capitalists of Portugal.

Yet the thing had to be done. Obviously it could not be done at Porto Santo, where there were no ships and no money. Influence must be used; and Columbus knew that his proposals, if they were to have even a chance of being listened to, must be presented in some high-flown and elaborate form, giving reasons and offering inducements and quoting authorities. He would have to get some one to help him in that; he would have to get up some scientific facts; his brother Bartholomew could help him, and some of those disagreeable relatives-in-law must also be pressed into the service of the Idea. Obviously the first thing was to go back to Lisbon; which accordingly Columbus did, about the year 1483.

CHAPTER IX

WANDERINGS WITH AN IDEA

THE man to whom Columbus proposed to address his request for means with which to make a voyage of discovery was no less a person than the new King of Portugal. Columbus was never a man of petty or small ideas; if he were going to do a thing at all, he went about it in a large and comprehensive way; and all his life he had a way of going to the fountain-head, and of making flights and leaps where other men would only climb or walk, that had much to do with his ultimate success. King John, moreover, had shown himself thoroughly sympathetic to the spirit of discovery; Columbus, as we have seen, had already been employed in a trusted capacity in one of the royal expeditions; and he rightly thought that, since he had to ask the help of some one in his enterprise, he might as well try to enlist the Crown itself in the service of his great Idea.

He was not prepared, however, to go directly to the King and ask for ships; his proposal would have to be put in a way that would appeal to the royal ambition, and would also satisfy the King that there was really a destination in view for the expedition. In other words Columbus had to propose to go somewhere; it would

not do to say that he was going west into the Atlantic Ocean to look about him. He therefore devoted all his energies to putting his proposal on what is called a business footing, and expressing his vague, sublime Idea in common and practical terms.

The people who probably helped him most in this were his brother Bartholomew and Martin Behaim, the great authority on scientific navigation, who had been living in Lisbon for some time and with whom Columbus was acquainted. Behaim, who was at this time about forty-eight years of age, was born at Nuremberg, and was a pupil of Regiomontanus, the great German astronomer. A very interesting man, this, if we could decipher his features and character; no mere star-gazing visionary, but a man of the world, whose scientific lore was combined with a wide and liberal experience of life. He was not only learned in cosmography and astronomy, but he had a genius for mechanics and made beautiful instruments; he was a merchant also, and combined a little business with his scientific travels. He had been employed at Lisbon in adapting the astrolabe of Regiomontanus for the use of sailors at sea; and in these labours he was assisted by two people who were destined to have a weighty influence on the career of Columbus—Doctors Rodrigo and Joseph, physicians or advisers to the King, and men of great academic reputation. There was nothing known about cosmography or astronomy that Behaim did not know; and he had just come back from an expedition on which he had been despatched, with

Rodrigo and Joseph, to take the altitude of the sun in Guinea.

Columbus was not the man to neglect his opportunities, and there can be no doubt that as soon as his purpose had established itself in his mind he made use of every opportunity that presented itself for improving his meagre scientific knowledge, in order that his proposal might be set forth in a plausible form. In other words, he got up the subject. The whole of his geographical reading with regard to the Indies up to this time had been in the travels of Marco Polo; the others whose works he quoted from so freely in later years were then known to him only by name, if at all. Behaim, however, could tell him a good deal about the supposed circumference of the earth, the extent of the Asiatic continent, and so on. Every new fact that Columbus heard he seized and pressed into the service of his Idea; where there was a choice of facts, or a difference of opinion between scientists, he chose the facts that were most convenient, and the opinions that fitted best with his own beliefs. The very word "Indies" was synonymous with unbounded wealth; there certainly would be riches to tempt the King with; and Columbus, being a religious man, hit also on the happy idea of setting forth the spiritual glory of carrying the light of faith across the Sea of Darkness, and making of the heathen a heritage for the Christian Church. So that, what with one thing and another, he soon had his proposals formally arranged.

Imagine him, then, actually at Court, and having an

audience of the King, who could scarcely believe his ears. Here was a man, of whom he knew nothing but that his conduct of a caravel had been well spoken of in the recent expedition to Guinea, actually proposing to sail out west into the Atlantic and to cross the unknown part of the world. Certainly his proposals seemed plausible, but still——. The earth was round, said Columbus, and therefore there was a way from East to West and from West to East. The prophet Esdras, a scientific authority that even His Majesty would hardly venture to doubt, had laid it down that only one-seventh of the earth was covered by the waters.[1] From this fact Columbus deduced that the maritime space extending westward between the shores of Europe and the eastern coast of Asia could not be very large; and by sailing westward he proposed to reach certain lands of which he claimed to have knowledge.[2] The sailors' tales, the logs of driftwood, the dead bodies, were all brought into the proposals; in short, if His Majesty would grant some ships, and consent to making Columbus Admiral over all the islands that he might discover, with full viceregal state, authority, and profit, he would go and discover them.

[1] The verses containing this statement are to be found in the Apocrypha, 2 Esdras vi. 42, 47:—"Upon the third day thou didst command that the waters should be gathered in the seventh part of the earth: six parts hast thou dried up, and kept them, to the intent that of these some being planted of God and tilled might serve thee. . . . Upon the fifth day thou saidst unto the seventh part, where the waters were gathered, that it should bring forth living creatures, fowls and fishes: and so it came to pass."

[2] Japan.

There are two different accounts of what the King said when this proposal was made to him. According to some authorities, John was impressed by Columbus's proposals, and inclined to provide him with the necessary ships, but he could not assent to all the titles and rewards which Columbus demanded as a price for his services. Barros, the Portuguese historian, on the other hand, represents that the whole idea was too fantastic to be seriously entertained by the King for a moment, and that although he at once made up his mind to refuse the request he preferred to delegate his refusal to a commission. Whatever may be the truth as to King John's opinions, the commission was certainly appointed, and consisted of three persons, to wit: Master Rodrigo, Master Joseph the Jew, and the Right Reverend Cazadilla, Bishop of Ceuta.

Before these three learned men must Columbus now appear, a little less happy in his mind, and wishing that he knew more Latin. Master Rodrigo, Master Joseph the Jew, the Right Reverend Cazadilla: three pairs of cold eyes turned rather haughtily on the Genoese adventurer; three brains much steeped in learning, directed in judgment on the Idea of a man with no learning at all. The Right Reverend Cazadilla, being the King's confessor, and a bishop into the bargain, could speak on that matter of converting the heathen; and he was of opinion that it could not be done. Joseph the Jew,

having made voyages, and worked with Behaim at the astrolabe, was surely an authority on navigation; and he was of opinion that it could not be done. Rodrigo, being also a very learned man, had read many books which Columbus had not read; and he was of opinion that it could not be done. Three learned opinions against one Idea; the Idea is bound to go. They would no doubt question Columbus on the scientific aspect of the matter, and would soon discover his grievous lack of academic knowledge. They would quote fluently passages from writers that he had not heard of; if he had not heard of them, they seemed to imply, no wonder he made such foolish proposals. Poor Columbus stands there puzzled, dissatisfied, tongue-tied. He cannot answer these wiseacres in their own learned lingo; what they say, or what they quote, may be true or it may not; but it has nothing to do with his Idea. If he opens his mouth to justify himself, they refute him with arguments that he does not understand; there is a wall between them. More than a wall; there is a world between them! It is his *credo* against their *ignoro;* it is his *expecto* against their *non video.* Yet in his *credo* there lies a power of which they do not dream; and it rings out in a trumpet note across the centuries, saluting the life force that opposes its irresistible "I will" to the feeble "Thou canst not" of the worldly-wise. Thus, in about the year 1483, did three learned men sit in judgment upon our ignorant Christopher. Three learned men: Doctors Rodrigo, Joseph the Jew, and the Right Reverend Cazadilla,

Bishop of Ceuta; three men, stuffed to the eyes and ears with learning; stuffed so full indeed that eyes and ears are closed with it. And three men, it would appear, wholly destitute of mother-wit.

After all his preparations this rebuff must have been a serious blow to Columbus. It was not his only trouble, moreover. During the last year he had been earning nothing; he was already in imagination the Admiral of the Ocean Seas; and in the anticipation of the much higher duties to which he hoped to be devoted it is not likely that he would continue at his humble task of making maps and charts. The result was that he got into debt, and it was absolutely necessary that something should be done. But a darker trouble had also almost certainly come to him about this time. Neither the day nor the year of Philippa's death is known; but it is likely that it occurred soon after Columbus's failure at the Portuguese Court, and immediately before his departure into Spain. That anonymous life, fulfilling itself so obscurely in companionship and motherhood, as softly as it floated upon the page of history, as softly fades from it again. Those kind eyes, that encouraging voice, that helping hand and friendly human soul are with him no longer; and after the interval of peace and restful growth that they afforded Christopher must strike his tent and go forth upon another stage of his pilgrimage with a heavier and sterner heart.

Two things are left to him: his son Diego, now an articulate little creature with character and personality of his own, and with strange, heart-breaking reminiscences of his mother in voice and countenance and manner—that is one possession; the other is his Idea. Two things alive and satisfactory, amid the ruin and loss of other possessions; two reasons for living and prevailing. And these two possessions Columbus took with him when he set out for Spain in the year 1485.

His first care was to take little Diego to the town of Huelva, where there lived a sister of Philippa's who had married a Spaniard named Muliartes. This done, he was able to devote himself solely to the furtherance of his Idea. For this purpose he went to Seville, where he attached himself for a little while to a group of his countrymen who were settled there, among them Antonio and Alessandro Geraldini, and made such momentary living as was possible to him by his old trade. But the Idea would not sleep. He talked of nothing else; and as men do who talk of an idea that possesses them wholly, and springs from the inner light of faith, he interested and impressed many of his hearers. Some of them suggested one thing, some another; but every one was agreed that it would be a good thing if he could enlist the services of the great Count (afterwards Duke) of Medini Celi, who had a palace at Rota, near Cadiz.

This nobleman was one of the most famous of the grandees of Spain, and lived in mighty state upon his territory along the sea-shore, serving the Crown in its

wars and expeditions with the power and dignity of an ally rather than of a subject. His domestic establishment was on a princely scale, filled with chamberlains, gentlemen-at-arms, knights, retainers, and all the panoply of social dignity; and there was also place in his household for persons of merit and in need of protection. To this great man came Columbus with his Idea. It attracted the Count, who was a judge of men and perhaps of ideas also; and Columbus, finding some hope at last in his attitude, accepted the hospitality offered to him, and remained at Rota through the winter of 1485–86. He had not been very hopeful when he arrived there, and had told the Count that he had thought of going to the King of France and asking for help from him; but the Count, who found something respectable and worthy of consideration in the Idea of a man who thought nothing of a journey in its service from one country to another and one sovereign to another, detained him, and played with the Idea himself. Three or four caravels were nothing to the Count of Medina Celi; but on the other hand the man was a grandee and a diplomat, with a nice sense of etiquette and of what was due to a reigning house. Either there was nothing in this Idea, in which case his caravels would be employed to no purpose, or there was so much in it that it was an undertaking, not merely for the Count of Medina Celi, but for the Crown of Castile. Lands across the ocean, and untold gold and riches of the Indies, suggested complications with foreign Powers, and transactions with the Pope himself, that would probably be a

little too much even for the good Count; therefore with a curious mixture of far-sighted generosity and shrewd security he wrote to Queen Isabella, recommending Columbus to her, and asking her to consider his Idea; asking her also, in case anything should come of it, to remember him (the Count), and to let him have a finger in the pie. Thus, with much literary circumstance and elaboration of politeness, the Count of Medina Celi to Queen Isabella.

Follows an interval of suspense, the beginning of a long discipline of suspense to which Columbus was to be subjected; and presently comes a favourable reply from the Queen, commanding that Columbus should be sent to her. Early in 1486 he set out for Cordova, where the Court was then established, bearing another letter from the Count in which his own private requests were repeated, and perhaps a little emphasised. Columbus was lodged in the house of Alonso de Quintanilla, Treasurer to the Crown of Castile, there to await an audience with Queen Isabella.

While he is waiting, and getting accustomed to his new surroundings, let us consider these two monarchs in whose presence he is soon to appear, and upon whose decision hangs some part of the world's destiny. Isabella first; for in that strange duet of government it is her womanly soprano that rings most clearly down the corridors of Time. We discern in her a very busy woman, living a difficult life with much tact and judgment, and exercising to some purpose that amiable taste for "doing

good" that marks the virtuous lady of station in every age. This, however, was a woman who took risks with her eyes open, and steered herself cleverly in perilous situations, and guided others with a firm hand also, and in other ways made good her claim to be a ruler. The consent and the will of her people were her great strength; by them she dethroned her niece and ascended the throne of Castile. She had the misfortune to be at variance with her husband in almost every matter of policy dear to his heart; she opposed the expulsion of the Jews and the establishment of the Inquisition; but when she failed to get her way, she was still able to preserve her affectionate relations with her husband without disagreement and with happiness. If she had a fault it was the common one of being too much under the influence of her confessors; but it was a fault that was rarely allowed to disturb the balance of her judgment. She liked clever people also; surrounded herself with men of letters and of science, fostered all learned institutions, and delighted in the details of civil administration. A very dignified and graceful figure, that could equally adorn a Court drawing-room or a field of battle; for she actually went into the field, and wore armour as becomingly as silk and ermine. Firm, constant, clever, alert, a little given to fussiness perhaps, but sympathetic and charming, with some claims to genius and some approach to grandeur of soul: so much we may say truly of her inner self. Outwardly she was a woman well formed, of medium height, a very dignified and graceful carriage, eyes of a clear summer blue, and

the red and gold of autumn in her hair—these last inherited from her English grandmother.

Ferdinand of Aragon appears not quite so favourably in our pages, for he never thought well of Columbus or of his proposals; and when he finally consented to the expedition he did so with only half a heart, and against his judgment. He was an extremely enterprising, extremely subtle, extremely courageous, and according to our modern notions, an extremely dishonest man; that is to say, his standards of honour were not those which we can accept nowadays. He thought nothing of going back on a promise, provided he got a priestly dispensation to do so; he juggled with his cabinets, and stopped at nothing in order to get his way; he had a craving ambition, and was lacking in magnanimity; he loved dominion, and cared very little for glory. A very capable man; so capable that in spite of his defects he was regarded by his subjects as wise and prudent; so capable that he used his weaknesses of character to strengthen and further the purposes of his reign. A very cold man also, quick and sure in his judgments, of wide understanding and grasp of affairs; simple and austere in dress and diet, as austerity was counted in that period of splendour; extremely industrious, and close in his observations and judgments of men. To the bodily eye he appeared as a man of middle size, sturdy and athletic, face burned a brick red with exposure to the sun and open air; hair and eyebrows of a bright chestnut; a well-formed and not unkindly mouth; a voice sharp and

unmelodious, issuing in quick fluent speech. This was the man that earned from the Pope, for himself and his successors, the title of "Most Catholic Majesty."

The Queen was very busy indeed with military preparations; but in the midst of her interviews with nobles and officers, contractors and state officials, she snatched a moment to receive the person Christopher Columbus. With that extreme mental agility which is characteristic of busy sovereigns all the force of this clever woman's mind was turned for a moment on Christopher, whose Idea had by this time invested him with a dignity which no amount of regal state could abash. There was very little time. The Queen heard what Columbus had to say, cutting him short, it is likely, with kindly tact, and suppressing his tendency to launch out into long-winded speeches. What she saw she liked; and, being too busy to give to this proposal the attention that it obviously merited, she told Columbus that the matter would be fully gone into and that in the meantime he must regard himself as the guest of the Court. And so, in the countenance of a smile and a promise, Columbus bows himself out. For the present he must wait a little and his hot heart must contain itself while other affairs, looming infinitely larger than his Idea on the royal horizon, receive the attention of the Court.

It was not the happiest moment, indeed, in which to talk of ships and charts, and lonely sea-roads, and far

away undiscovered shores. Things at home were very real and lively in those spring days at Cordova. The war against the Moors had reached a critical stage; King Ferdinand was away laying siege to the city of Loxa, and though the Queen was at Cordova she was entirely occupied with the business of collecting and forwarding troops and supplies to his aid. The streets were full of soldiers; nobles and grandees from all over the country were arriving daily with their retinues; glitter and splendour, and the pomp of warlike preparation, filled the city. Early in June the Queen herself went to the front and joined her husband in the siege of Moclin; and when this was victoriously ended, and they had returned in triumph to Cordova, they had to set out again for Gallicia to suppress a rebellion there. When that was over they did not come back to Cordova at all, but repaired at once to Salamanca to spend the winter there.

At the house of Alonso de Quintanilla, however, Columbus was not altogether wasting his time. He met there some of the great persons of the Court, among them the celebrated Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, Archbishop of Toledo and Grand Cardinal of Spain. This was far too great a man to be at this time anything like a friend of Columbus; but Columbus had been presented to him; the Cardinal would know his name, and what his business was; and that is always a step towards consideration. Cabrero, the royal Chamberlain, was also often a fellow-guest at the Treasurer's table; and with him Columbus contracted something like a friendship

Every one who met him liked him; his dignity, his simplicity of thought and manner, his experience of the sea, and his calm certainty and conviction about the stupendous thing which he proposed to do, could not fail to attract the liking and admiration of those with whom he came in contact. In the meantime a committee appointed by the Queen sat upon his proposals. The committee met under the presidentship of Hernando de Talavera, the prior of the monastery of Santa Maria del Prado, near Valladolid, a pious ecclesiastic, who had the rare quality of honesty, and who was therefore a favourite with Queen Isabella; she afterwards created him Archbishop of Granada. He was not, however, poor honest soul! quite the man to grasp and grapple with this wild scheme for a voyage across the ocean. Once more Columbus, as in Portugal, set forth his views with eloquence and conviction; and once more, at the tribunal of learning, his unlearned proposals were examined and condemned. Not only was Columbus's Idea regarded as scientifically impossible, but it was also held to come perilously near to heresy, in its assumption of a state of affairs that was clearly at variance with the writings of the Fathers and the sacred Scriptures themselves.

This new disappointment, bitter though it was, did not find Columbus in such friendless and unhappy circumstances as those in which he left Portugal. He had important friends now, who were willing and anxious to help him, and among them was one to whom he turned, in his profound depression, for religious and

friendly consolation. This was Diego de Deza, prior of the Dominican convent of San Estevan at Salamanca, who was also professor of theology in the university there and tutor to the young Prince Juan. Of all those who came in contact with Columbus at this time this man seems to have understood him best, and to have realised where his difficulty lay. Like many others who are consumed with a burning idea Columbus was very probably at this time in danger of becoming possessed with it like a monomaniac; and his new friends saw that if he were to make any impression upon the conservative learning of the time to which a decision in such matters was always referred he must have some opportunity for friendly discussion with learned men who were not inimical to him, and who were not in the position of judges examining a man arraigned before them and pleading for benefits.

When the Court went to Salamanca at the end of 1486, Deza arranged that Columbus should go there too, and he lodged him in a country farm called Valcuebo, which belonged to his convent and was equi-distant from it and the city. Here the good Dominican fathers came and visited him, bringing with them professors from the university, who discussed patiently with Columbus his theories and ambitions, and, himself all conscious, communicated new knowledge to him, and quietly put him right on many a scientific point. There were professors of cosmography and astronomy in the university, familiar with the works of Alfraganus and Regiomontanus. It

is likely that it was at this time that Columbus became possessed of d'Ailly's *Imago Mundi*, which little volume contained a popular *resumé* of the scientific views of Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and others, and was from this time forth Columbus's constant companion.

Here at Valcuebo and later, when winter came, in the great hall of the Dominican convent at Salamanca, known as the "De Profundis" hall, where the monks received guests and held discussions, the Idea of Columbus was ventilated and examined. He heard what friendly sceptics had to say about it; he saw the kind of argument that he would have to oppose to the existing scientific and philosophical knowledge on cosmography. There is no doubt that he learnt a good deal at this time; and more important even than this, he got his project known and talked about; and he made powerful friends, who were afterwards to be of great use to him. The Marquesa de Moya, wife of his friend Cabrera, took a great liking to him; and as she was one of the oldest and closest friends of the Queen, it is likely that she spoke many a good word for Columbus in Isabella's ear.

By the time the Court moved to Cordova early in 1487, Columbus was once more hopeful of getting a favourable hearing. He followed the Court to Cordova, where he received a gracious message from the Queen to the effect that she had not forgotten him, and that as soon as her military preoccupations permitted it, she would go once more, and more fully, into his proposals. In the

meantime he was attached to the Court, and received a quarterly payment of 3000 maravedis. It seemed as though the unfavourable decision of Talavera's committee had been forgotten.

In the meantime he was to have a change of scene. Isabella followed Ferdinand to the siege of Malaga, where the Court was established; and as there were intervals in which other than military business might be transacted, Columbus was ordered to follow them in case his affairs should come up for consideration. They did not; but the man himself had an experience that may have helped to keep his thoughts from brooding too much on his unfulfilled ambition. Years afterwards, when far away on lonely seas, amid the squalor of a little ship and the staggering buffets of a gale, there would surely sometimes leap into his memory a brightly coloured picture of this scene in the fertile valley of Malaga: the silken pavilions of the Court, the great encampment of nobility with its arms and banners extending in a semicircle to the sea-shore, all glistening and moving in the bright sunshine. There was added excitement at this time at an attempt to assassinate Ferdinand and Isabella, a fanatic Moor having crept up to one of the pavilions and aimed a blow at two people whom he mistook for the King and Queen. They turned out to be Don Alvaro de Portugal, who was dangerously wounded, and Columbus's friend, the Marquesa de Moya, who was unhurt; but it was felt that the King and Queen had had a narrow escape. The siege was raised on the 18th of August, and the

sovereigns went to spend the winter at Zaragoza; and Columbus, once more condemned to wait, went back to Cordova.

It was here that he contracted his second and, so far as we know, his last romantic attachment. The long idle days of summer and autumn at Cordova, empty of all serious occupation, gave nature an opportunity for indulging her passion for life and continuity. Among Christopher's friends at Cordova was the family of Arana, friendly hospitable souls, by some accounts noble and by others not noble, and certainly in somewhat poor circumstances, who had welcomed him to their house, listened to his plans with enthusiasm, and formed a life-long friendship with him. Three members of this family are known to us—two brothers, Diego and Pedro, both of whom commanded ships in Columbus's expeditions, and a sister Beatriz. Columbus was now a man of six-and-thirty, while she was little more than a girl; he was handsome and winning, distinguished by the daring and importance of his scheme, full of thrilling and romantic talk of distant lands; a very interesting companion, we may be sure. No wonder she fell in love with Christopher; no wonder that he, feeling lonely and depressed by the many postponements of his suit at Court, and in need of sympathy and encouragement, fell in these blank summer days into an intimacy that flamed into a brief but happy passion. Why Columbus never married Beatriz

de Arana we cannot be sure, for it is almost certain that his first wife had died some time before. Perhaps he feared to involve himself in any new or embarrassing ties; perhaps he loved unwillingly, and against his reason; perhaps—although the suggestion is not a happy one—he by this time did not think poor Beatriz good enough for the Admiral-elect of the Ocean Seas; perhaps (and more probably) Beatriz was already married and deserted, for she bore the surname of Enriquez; and in that case, there being no such thing as a divorce in the Catholic Church, she must either sin or be celibate. But however that may be, there was an uncanonical alliance between them which evidently did not in the least scandalise her brothers and which resulted in the birth of Ferdinand Columbus in the following year. Christopher, so communicative and discursive upon some of his affairs, is as reticent about Beatriz as he was about Philippa. Beatriz shares with his legitimate wife the curious distinction of being spoken of by Columbus to posterity only in his will, which was executed at Valladolid the day before he died. In the dry ink and vellum of that ancient legal document is his only record of these two passions. The reference to Beatriz is as follows:—

"And I direct him [Diego] to make provision for Beatriz Enriquez, mother of D. Fernando, my son, that she may be able to live honestly, being a person to whom I am under very great obligation. And this shall be done for the satisfaction of my conscience, because this matter weighs heavily upon my soul. The reason for which it is not fitting to write here."

About the condition of Beatriz, temporal and spiritual, there has been much controversy; but where the facts are all so buried and inaccessible it is unseemly to agitate a veil which we cannot lift, and behind which Columbus himself sheltered this incident of his life. "Acquainted with poverty" is one fragment of fact concerning her that has come down to us; acquainted also with love and with happiness, it would seem, as many poor persons undoubtedly are. Enough for us to know that in the city of Cordova there lived a woman, rich or poor, gentle or humble, married or not married, who brought for a time love and friendly companionship into the life of Columbus; that she gave what she had for giving, without stint or reserve, and that she became the mother of a son who inherited much of what was best in his father, and but for whom the world would be in even greater darkness than it is on the subject of Christopher himself. And so no more of Beatriz Enriquez de Arana, whom (1520) "God has in his keeping"—and has had now these many centuries of Time.

Thus passed the summer and autumn of 1487; precious months, precious years slipping by, and the great purpose as yet unfulfilled and seemingly no nearer to fulfilment. It is likely that Columbus kept up his applications to the Court, and received polite and delaying replies. The next year came, and the Court migrated from Zaragoza to Murcia, from Murcia to Valladolid,

from Valladolid to Medina del Campo. Columbus attended it in one or other of these places, but without result. In August Beatriz gave birth to a son, who was christened Ferdinand, and who lived to be a great comfort to his father, if not to her also. But the miracle of paternity was not now so new and wonderful as it had been; the battle of life, with its crosses and difficulties, was thick about him; and perhaps he looked into this new-comer's small face with conflicting thoughts, and memories of the long white beach and the crashing surf at Porto Santo, and regret for things lost—so strangely mingled and inconsistent are the threads of human thought. At last he decided to turn his face elsewhere. In September 1488 he went to Lisbon, for what purpose it is not certain; possibly in connection with the affairs of his dead wife; and probably also in the expectation of seeing his brother Bartholomew, to whom we may now turn our attention for a moment.

After the failure of Columbus's proposals to the King of Portugal in 1486, and the break-up of his home there, Bartholomew had also left Lisbon. Bartholomew Diaz, a famous Portuguese navigator, was leaving for the African coast in August, and Bartholomew Columbus is said to have joined his small expedition of three caravels. As they neared the latitude of the Cape which he was trying to make, he ran into a gale which drove him a long way out of his course, west and south.

The wind veered round from north-east to north-west, and he did not strike the land again until May 1487. When he did so his crew insisted upon his returning, as they declined to go any further south. He therefore turned to the west, and then made the startling discovery that in the course of the tempest he had been blown round the Cape, and that the land he had made was to the eastward of it; and he therefore rounded it on his way home. He arrived back in Lisbon in December 1488, when Columbus met his brother again, and was present at the reception of Diaz by the King of Portugal. They had a great deal to tell each other, these two brothers; in the two years and a half that had gone since they had parted a great deal had happened to them; and they both knew a good deal more about the great question in which they were interested than they had known when last they talked.

It is to this period that I attribute the inception, if not the execution, of the forgery of the Toscanelli correspondence, if, as I believe, it was a forgery. Christopher's unpleasant experiences before learned committees and commissions had convinced him that unless he were armed with some authoritative and documentary support for his theories they had little chance of acceptance by the learned. The Idea was right; he knew that; but before he could convince the academic mind, he felt that it must have the *imprimatur* of a mind whose learning could not be impugned. Therefore it is not an unfair guess—and it can be nothing more than a

guess—that Christopher and Bartholomew at this point laid their heads together, and decided that the next time Christopher had to appear before a commission he would, so to speak, have something "up his sleeve." It was a risky thing to do, and must in any case be used only as a very last resource; which would account for the fact that the Toscanelli correspondence was never used at all, and is not mentioned in any document known to men written until long after Columbus's death.[1]

But these summers and winters of suspense are at last drawing to a close, and we must follow Christopher rapidly through them until the hour of his triumph. He was back in Spain in the spring of 1489, his travelling expenses being defrayed out of the royal purse; and a little later he was once more amid scenes of war at the siege of Baza, and, if report is true, taking a hand himself, not without distinction. It was there that he saw the two friars from the convent of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, who brought a message from the Grand Soldan of Egypt, threatening the destruction of the Sepulchre if the Spanish sovereigns did not desist from the war against Granada; and it was there that in his simple and pious mind he formed the resolve that if ever his efforts should be crowned with success, and he himself become rich and powerful, he would send a crusade for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. And it

[1] See Appendix B.

was there that, on the 22nd of December, he saw Boabdil, the elder of the two rival Kings of Granada, surrender all his rights and claims to Spain. Surely now there will be a chance for him? No; there is another interruption, this time occasioned by the royal preparations for the marriage of the Princess Isabella to the heir of Portugal. Poor Columbus, sickened and disappointed by these continual delays, irritated by a sense of the waste of his precious time, follows the Court about from one place to another, raising a smile here and a scoff there, and pointed at by children in the street. There is nothing so ludicrous as an Idea to those who do not share it.

Another summer, another winter, lost out of a life made up of a limited number of summers and winters; a few more winters and summers, thinks Christopher, and I shall be in a world where Ideas are not needed, and where there is nothing left to discover! Something had to be done. In the beginning of 1491 there was only one thing spoken of at Court—the preparations for the siege of Granada, which did not interest Columbus at all. The camp of King Ferdinand was situated at Santa Fé, a few miles to the westward of Granada, and Columbus came here late in the year, determined to get a final answer one way or the other to his question. He made his application, and the busy monarchs once more adopted their usual polite tactics. They appointed a *junta*, which was presided over by no less a person than the Cardinal of Spain, Gonzales de Mendoza. Once more

the weary business was gone through, but Columbus must have had some hopes of success, since he did not produce his forged Toscanelli correspondence. It was no scruple of conscience that held him back, we may be sure; the crafty Genoese knew nothing about such scruples in the attainment of a great object; he would not have hesitated to adopt any means to secure an end which he felt to be so desirable. So it is probable that either he was not quite sure of his ground and his courage failed him, or that he had hopes, owing to his friendship with so many of the members of the *junta*, that a favourable decision would at last be arrived at. In this he was mistaken. The Spanish prelates again quoted the Fathers of the Church, and disposed of his proposals simply on the ground that they were heretical. Much talk, and much wagging of learned heads; and still no mother-wit or gleam of light on this obscurity of learning. The *junta* decided against the proposals, and reported its decision to the King and Queen. The monarchs, true to their somewhat hedging methods when there was anything to be gained by hedging, informed Columbus that at present they were too much occupied with the war to grant his requests; but that, when the preoccupations and expenses of the campaign were a thing of the past, they might again turn their attention to his very interesting suggestion.

It was at this point that the patience of Columbus broke down. Too many promises had been made to him, and hope had been held out to him too often for him

to believe any more in it. Spain, he decided, was useless; he would try France; at least he would be no worse off there. But he had first of all to settle his affairs as well as possible. Diego, now a growing boy nearly eleven years old, had been staying with Beatriz at Cordova, and going to school there; Christopher would take him back to his aunt's at Huelva before he went away. He set out with a heavy heart, but with purpose and determination unimpaired.

CHAPTER X

OUR LADY OF LA RABIDA

IT is a long road from Santa Fé to Huelva, a long journey to make on foot, and the company of a sad heart and a little talking boy, prone to sudden weariness and the asking of innumerable difficult questions, would not make it very much shorter. Every step that Christopher took carried him farther away from the glittering scene where his hopes had once been so bright, and were now fallen to the dust; and every step brought him nearer that unknown destiny as to which he was in great darkness of mind, and certain only that there was some small next thing constantly to be done: the putting down of one foot after another, the request for food and lodging at the end of each short day's march, the setting out again in the morning. That walk from Santa Fé, so real and painful and wearisome and long a thing to Christopher and Diego, is utterly blank and obliterated for us. What he thought and felt and suffered are things quite dead; what he did—namely, to go and do the immediate thing that it seemed possible and right for him to do—is a living fact to-day, for it brought him, as all brave and honest doing will, a little

nearer to his destiny, a little nearer to the truthful realisation of what was in him.

At about a day's journey from Huelva, where the general slope of the land begins to fall towards the sea, two small rivers, the Odiel and the Tinto, which have hitherto been making music each for itself through the pleasant valleys and vineyards of Andalusia, join forces, and run with a deeper stream towards the sea at Palos. The town of Palos lay on the banks of the river; a little to the south of it, and on the brow of a rocky promontory dark with pine trees, there stood the convent of Our Lady of La Rabida. Stood, on this November evening in the year 1491; had stood in some form or other, and used for varying purposes, for many years and centuries before that, even to the time of the Romans; and still stands, a silent and neglected place, yet to be visited and seen by such as are curious. To the door of this place comes Christopher as darkness falls, urged thereto by the plight of Diego, who is tired and hungry. Christopher rings the bell, and asks the porter for a little bread and water for the child, and a lodging for them both. There is some talk at the door; the Franciscan lay brother being given, at all times in the history of his order, to the pleasant indulgence of gossiping conversation, when that is lawful; and the presence of a stranger, who speaks with a foreign accent, being at all times an incident of interest and even of excitement in the quiet life of a monastery. The moment is one big with import to the human race; it

marks a period in the history of our man; the scene is worth calling up. Dark night, with sea breezes moaning in the pine trees, outside; raying light from within falling on the lay brother leaning in the doorway and on the two figures standing without: on Christopher, grave, subdued, weary, yet now as always of pleasant and impressive address, and on the small boy who stands beside him round-eyed and expectant, his fatigue for the moment forgotten in curiosity and anticipation.

While they are talking comes no less a person than the Prior of the monastery, Friar Juan Perez, bustling round, good-natured busybody that he is, to see what is all this talk at the door. The Prior, as is the habit of monks, begins by asking questions. What is the stranger's name? Where does he come from? Where is he going to? What is his business? Is the little boy his son? He has actually come from Santa Fé? The Prior, loving talk after the manner of his kind, sees in this grave and smooth-spoken stranger rich possibilities of talk; possibilities that cannot possibly be exhausted to-night, it being now hard on the hour of Compline; the stranger must come in and rest for to-night at least, and possibly for several nights. There is much bustle and preparation; the travellers are welcomed with monkish hospitality; Christopher, we may be sure, goes and hears the convent singing Compline, and offers up devout prayers for a quiet night and for safe conduct through this vale of tears; and goes thankfully to bed with the plainsong echoing in his ears, and some

LA RABIDA

stoic sense that all days, however hard, have an evening, and all journeys an end.

Next morning the talk begins in earnest, and Christopher, never a very reserved man, finds in the friendly curiosity of the monks abundant encouragement to talk; and before very long he is in full swing with his oft-told story. The Prior is delighted with it; he has not heard anything so interesting for a long time. Moreover, he has not always been in a convent; he was not so long ago confessor to Queen Isabella herself, and has much to communicate and ask concerning that lady. Columbus's proposal does not strike him as being unreasonable at all; but he has a friend in Palos, a very learned man indeed, Doctor Garcia Hernandez, who often comes and has a talk with him; he knows all about astronomy and cosmography; the Prior will send for him. And meanwhile there must be no word of Columbus's departure for a few days at any rate.

Presently Doctor Garcia Hernandez arrives, and the whole story is gone over again. They go at it hammer and tongs, arguments and counter-arguments, reasons for and against, encouragements and objections. The result is that Doctor Garcia Hernandez, whose learning seems not yet quite to have blinded or deafened him, thinks well of the scheme; thinks so well of it that he protests it will be a thousand pities if the chance of carrying it out is lost to Spain. The worthy Prior, who has been somewhat out of it while the talk about degrees and latitudes has been going on, here strikes in again; he

will use his influence. Perhaps the good man, living up here among the pine trees and the sea winds, and involved in the monotonous round of Prime, Lauds, Nones, Vespers, has a regretful thought or two of the time when he moved in the splendid intricacy of Court life; at any rate he is not sorry to have an opportunity of recalling himself to the attention of Her Majesty, for the spiritual safety of whose soul he was once responsible; perhaps, being (in spite of his Nones and Vespers) a human soul, he is glad of an opportunity of opposing the counsels of his successor, Talavera. In a word, he will use his Influence. Then follow much drafting of letters, and laying of heads together, and clatter of monkish tongues; the upshot of which is that a letter is written in which Perez urges his daughter in the Lord in the strongest possible terms not to let slip so glorious an opportunity, not only of fame and increment to her kingdom, but of service to the Church and the kingdom of Heaven itself. He assures her that Columbus is indeed about to depart from the country, but that he (Perez) will detain him at La Rabida until he has an answer from the Queen.

A messenger to carry the letter was found in the person of Sebastian Rodriguez, a pilot of the port, who immediately set off to Santa Fé. It is not likely that Columbus, after so many rebuffs, was very hopeful; but in the meantime, here he was amid the pious surroundings in which the religious part of him delighted, and in a haven of rest after all his turmoils and trials. He could

look out to sea over the flecked waters of that Atlantic whose secrets he longed to discover; or he could look down into the busy little port of Palos, and watch the ships sailing in and out across the bar of Saltes. He could let his soul, much battered and torn of late by trials and disappointments, rest for a time on the rock of religion; he could snuff the incense in the chapel to his heart's content, and mingle his rough top-gallant voice with the harsh croak of the monks in the daily cycle of prayer and praise. He could walk with Diego through the sandy roads beneath the pine trees, or through the fields and vineyards below; and above all he could talk to the company that good Perez invited to meet him—among them merchants and sailors from Palos, of whom the chief was Martin Alonso Pinzon, a wealthy landowner and navigator, whose family lived then at Palos, owning the vineyards round about, and whose descendants live there to this day. Pinzon was a listener after Columbus's own heart; he not only believed in his project, but offered to assist it with money, and even to accompany the expedition himself. Altogether a happy and peaceful time, in which hopes revived, and the inner light that, although it had now and then flickered, had never gone out, burned up again in a bright and steady flame.

At the end of a fortnight, and much sooner than had been expected, the worthy pilot returned with a letter from the Queen. Eager hands seized it and opened it; delight beamed from the eyes of the good Prior. The Queen was most cordial to him, thanked

him for his intervention, was ready to listen to him and even to be convinced by him; and in the meantime commanded his immediate appearance at the Court, asking that Columbus would be so good as to wait at La Rabida until he should hear further from her. Then followed such a fussing and fuming, such a running hither and thither, and giving and taking of instructions and clatter of tongues as even the convent of La Rabida had probably never known. Nothing will serve the good old busybody, although it is now near midnight, but that he must depart at once. He will not wait for daylight; he will not, the good honest soul! wait at all. He must be off at once; he must have this, he must have that; he will take this, he will leave that behind; or no, he will take that, and leave this behind. He must have a mule, for his old feet will not bear him fast enough; ex-confessors of Her Majesty, moreover, do not travel on foot; and after more fussing and running hither and thither a mule is borrowed from one Juan Rodriguez Cabezudo of Moguer; and with a God-speed from the group standing round the lighted doorway, the old monk sets forth into the night.

It is a strange thing to consider what unimportant flotsam sometimes floats visibly upon the stream of history, while the gravest events are sunk deep beneath its flood. We would give a king's ransom to know events that must have taken place in any one of twenty years in the

life of Columbus, but there is no sign of them on the surface of the stream, nor will any fishing bring them to light. Yet here, bobbing up like a cork, comes the name of Juan Rodriguez Cabezudo of Moguer, doubtless a good worthy soul, but, since he has been dead these four centuries and more, of no interest or importance to any human being; yet of whose life one trivial act, surviving the flood of time which has engulfed all else that he thought important, falls here to be recorded: that he did, towards midnight of a day late in December 1491, lend a mule to Friar Juan Perez.

Of that heroic mule journey we have no record; but it brought results enough to compensate the good Prior for all his aching bones and rheumatic joints. He was welcomed by the Queen, who had never quite lost her belief in Columbus, but who had hitherto deferred to the apathy of Ferdinand and the disapproval of her learned advisers. Now, however, the matter was reopened. She, who sometimes listened to priests with results other than good, heard this worthy priest to good purpose. The feminine friends of Columbus who remembered him at Court also spoke up for him, among them the Marquesa de Moya, with whom he had always been a favourite; and it was decided that his request should be granted and three vessels equipped for the expedition, "that he might go and make discoveries and prove true the words he had spoken." Moreover, the

machinery that had been so hard to move before, turned swiftly now. Diego Prieto, one of the magistrates of Palos, was sent to Columbus at La Rabida, bearing 20,000 maravedis[1] with which he was to buy a mule and decent clothing for himself, and repair immediately to the Court at Santa Fé. Old Perez was in high feather, and busy with his pen. He wrote to Doctor Garcia Hernandez, and also to Columbus, in whose letter the following pleasant passage occurs:—

"Our Lord has listened to the prayers of His servant. The wise and virtuous Isabella, touched by the grace of Heaven, gave a favourable hearing to the words of this poor monk. All has turned out well. Far from despising your project, she has adopted it from this time, and she has summoned you to Court to propose the means which seem best to you for the execution of the designs of Providence. My heart swims in a sea of comfort, and my spirit leaps with joy in the Lord. Start at once, for the Queen waits for you, and I much more than she. Commend me to the prayers of my brethren, and of your little Diego. The grace of God be with you, and may Our Lady of La Rabida accompany you."

The news of that day must have come upon Columbus like a burst of sunshine after rain. I like to think how bright must have seemed to him the broad view of land and sea, how deeply the solemn words of the last office which he attended must have sunk into his soul, how great and glad a thing life must have been to him, and how lightly the miles must have passed beneath the feet of his mule as he jogged out on the long road to Santa Fé.

[1] 20,000 maravedis = about £17 or $82.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONSENT OF SPAIN

ONCE more, in the last days of the year 1491, Columbus rode into the brilliant camp which he had quitted a few weeks before with so heavy a heart. Things were changed now. Instead of being a suitor, making a nuisance of himself, and forcing his affairs on the attention of unwilling officials, he was now an invited and honoured guest; much more than that, he was in the position of one who believed that he had a great service to render to the Crown, and who was at last to be permitted to render it.

Even now, at the eleventh hour, there was one more brief interruption. On the 1st of January 1492 the last of the Moorish kings sent in his surrender to King Ferdinand, whom he invited to come and take possession of the city of Granada; and on the next day the Spanish army marched into that city, where, in front of the Alhambra, King Ferdinand received the keys of the castle and the homage of the Moorish king. The wars of eight centuries were at an end, and the Christian banner of Spain floated at last over the whole land. Victory and success were in the air, and the humble

Genoese adventurer was to have his share in them. Negotiations of a practical nature were now begun; old friends—Talavera, Luis de Santangel, and the Grand Cardinal himself—were all brought into consultation; with the result that matters soon got to the documentary stage. Here, however, there was a slight hitch. It was not simply a matter of granting two or three ships. The Genoese was making a bargain, and asking an impossible price. Even the great grandees and Court officials, accustomed to the glitter and dignity of titles, rubbed their eyes with astonishment, when they saw what Columbus was demanding. He who had been suing for privileges was now making conditions. And what conditions! He must be created Admiral of all the Ocean Seas and of the new lands, with equal privileges and prerogatives as those appertaining to the High Admiral of Castile, the supreme naval officer of Spain. Not content with sea dignities, he was also to be Viceroy and Governor-General in all islands or mainlands that he might acquire; he wanted a tenth part of the profits resulting from his discoveries, in perpetuity; and he must have the permanent right of contributing an eighth part of the cost of the equipment and have an additional eighth part of the profits; and all his heirs and descendants for ever were to have the same privileges. These conditions were on such a scale as no sovereign could readily approve. Columbus's lack of pedigree, and the fact also that he was a foreigner, made them seem the more preposterous; for although he might receive kind-

ness and even friendship from some of the grand Spaniards with whom he associated, that friendship and kindness were given condescendingly and with a smile. He was delightful when he was merely proposing as a mariner to confer additional grandeur and glory on the Crown; but when it came to demanding titles and privileges which would make him rank with the highest grandees in the land, the matter took on quite a different colour. It was nonsense; it could not be allowed; and many were the friendly hints that Columbus doubtless received at this time to relinquish his wild demands and not to over-reach himself.

But to the surprise and dismay of his friends, who really wished him to have a chance of distinguishing himself, and were shocked at the impediments he was now putting in his own way, the man from Genoa stood firm. What he proposed to do, he said, was worthy of the rewards that he asked; they were due to the importance and grandeur of his scheme, and so on. Nor did he fail to point out that the bestowal of them was a matter altogether contingent on results; if there were no results, there would be no rewards; if there were results, they would be worthy of the rewards. This action of Columbus's deserves close study. He had come to a turning-point in his life. He had been asking, asking, asking, for six years; he had been put off and refused over and over again; people were beginning to laugh at him for a madman; and now, when a combination of lucky chances had brought him to the very door

of success, he stood outside the threshold bargaining for a preposterous price before he would come in. It seemed like the densest stupidity. What is the explanation of it?

The only explanation of it is to be found in the character of Columbus. We must try to see him as he is in this forty-second year of his life, bargaining with notaries, bishops, and treasurers; we must try to see where these forty years have brought him, and what they have made of him. Remember the little boy that played in the Vico Dritto di Ponticello, acquainted with poverty, but with a soul in him that could rise beyond it and acquire something of the dignity of that Genoa, arrogant, splendid and devout, which surrounded him during his early years. Remember his long life of obscurity at sea, and the slow kindling of the light of faith in something beyond the familiar horizons; remember the social inequality of his marriage, his long struggle with poverty, his long familiarity with the position of one who asked and did not receive; the many rebuffs and indignities which his Ligurian pride must have received at the hands of all those Spanish dignitaries and grandees—remember all this, and then you will perhaps not wonder so much that Columbus, who was beginning to believe himself appointed by Heaven to this task of discovery, felt that he had much to pay himself back for. One must recognise him frankly for what he was, and for no conventional hero of romance; a man who would reconcile his conscience with anything, and would stop at nothing

in the furtherance of what he deemed a good object; and a man at the same time who had a conscience to reconcile, and would, whenever it was necessary, laboriously and elaborately perform the act of reconciliation. When he made these huge demands in Granada he was gambling with his chances; but he was a calculating gambler, just about as cunning and crafty in the weighing of one chance against another as a gambler with a conscience can be; and he evidently realised that his own valuation of the services he proposed to render would not be without its influence on his sovereign's estimate of them. At any rate he was justified by the results, for on the 17th of April 1492, after a deal of talk and bargaining, but apparently without any yielding on Columbus's part, articles of capitulation[1] were drawn up in which the following provisions were made:—

First, that Columbus and his heirs for ever should have the title and office of Admiral in all the islands and continents of the ocean that he or they might discover, with similar honours and prerogatives to those enjoyed by the High Admiral of Castile.

Second, that he and his heirs should be Viceroys and Governors-General over all the said lands and continents, with the right of nominating three candidates for the governing of each island or province, one of whom should be appointed by the Crown.

Third, that he and his heirs should be entitled to one-

[1] See Appendix C.

tenth of all precious stones, metals, spices, and other merchandises, however acquired, within his Admiralty, the cost of acquisition being first deducted.

Fourth, that he or his lieutenants in their districts, and the High Admiral of Castile in his district, should be the sole judge in all disputes arising out of traffic between Spain and the new countries.

Fifth, that he now, and he and his heirs at all times, should have the right to contribute the eighth part of the expense of fitting out expeditions, and receive the eighth part of the profits.

In addition to these articles there was another document drawn up on the 30th of April, which after an infinite preamble about the nature of the Holy Trinity, of the Apostle Saint James, and of the Saints of God generally in their relations to Princes, and with a splendid trailing of gorgeous Spanish names and titles across the page, confers upon our hitherto humble Christopher the right to call himself "Don," and finally raises him, in his own estimation at any rate, to a social level with his proud Spanish friends. It is probably from this time that he adopted the Spanish form of his name, Christoval Colon; but in this narrative I shall retain the more universal form in which it has become familiar to the English-speaking world.

He was now upon a Pisgah height, from which in imagination he could look forth and see his Land of Promise. We also may climb up with him, and stand beside him as he looks westward. We shall not see so

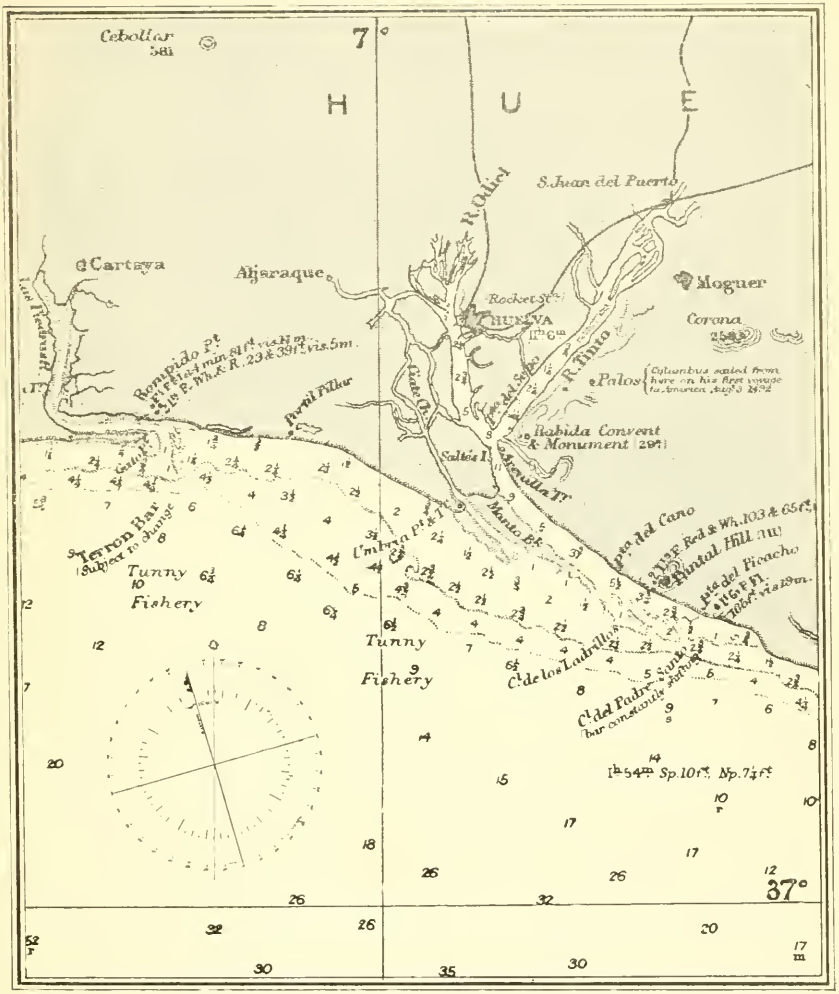
clearly as he sees, for we have not his inner light; and it is probable that even he does not see the road at all, but only the goal, a single point of light shining across a gulf of darkness. But from Pisgah there is a view backward as well as forward, and we may look back for a moment on this last period of Christopher's life in Spain, inwardly to him so full of trouble and difficulty and disappointment, outwardly so brave and glittering, musical with high-sounding names and the clash of arms, gay with sun and shine and colour. The brilliant Court moving from camp to camp with its gorgeous retinues and silken pavilions and uniforms and dresses and armours; the excitement of war, the intrigues of the antechamber—these are the bright fabric of the latter years; and against it, as against a background, stand out the beautiful names of the Spanish associates of Columbus at this time—Medina Celi, Alonso de Quintanilla, Cabrero, Arana, Deza, Hernando de Talavera, Gonzales de Mendoza, Alonso de Cardenas, Perez, Hernandez, Luis de Santangel, and Rodriguez de Maldonado—names that now, in his hour of triumph, are like banners streaming in the wind against a summer sky.

CHAPTER XII

THE PREPARATIONS AT PALOS

THE Palos that witnessed the fitting out of the ships of Columbus exists no longer. The soul is gone from it; the trade that in those days made it great and busy has floated away from it into other channels; and it has dwindled and shrunk, until to-day it consists of nothing but a double street of poor white houses, such almost as you may see in any sea-coast village in Ireland. The slow salt tides of the Atlantic come flooding in over the Manto bank, across the bar of Saltes, and, dividing at the tongue of land that separates the two rivers, creep up the mud banks of the Tinto and the Odiel until they lie deep beside the wharves of Huelva and Palos; but although Huelva still has a trade the tides bring nothing to Palos, and take nothing away with them again. From La Rabida now you can no longer see, as Columbus saw, fleets of caravels lying-to and standing off and on outside the bar waiting for the flood tide; only a few poor boats fishing for tunny in the empty sunny waters, or the smoke of a steamer standing on her course for the Guadalquiver or Cadiz.

But in those spring days of 1492 there was a great


Cebollar
Sdi
7°
H
U
E
S.Juan del Puerto
R.Odiel
Cartaya
Aljaraque
Moguer
Rocket 30°
HUELVA
Corona
R.Tinto
Palos
Columbus sailed from here on his first voyage to America Aug.3 1492
Rompido Pt.
Fl.15s.11m.
Fl.Wh.& R.1m.
Fl.Wh.& R.2m.
Fl.Wh.& R.2m.
Vis.5m.
Punta del Sebo
Punta del Caño
Fl.Wh.& R.29 & 39ft. vis.5m.

stir and bustle of preparation in Palos. As soon as the legal documents had been signed Columbus returned there and, taking up his quarters at La Rabida, set about fitting out his expedition. The reason Palos was chosen was an economical one. The port, for some misdemeanour, had lately been condemned to provide two caravels for the service of the Crown for a period of twelve months; and in the impoverished state of the royal exchequer this free service came in very usefully in fitting out the expedition of discovery. Columbus was quite satisfied, since he had such good friends at Palos; and he immediately set about choosing the ships.

This, however, did not prove to be quite such a straightforward business as might have been expected. The truth is that, whatever a few monks and physicians may have thought of it, the proposed expedition terrified the ordinary seafaring population of Palos. It was thought to be the wildest and maddest scheme that any one had ever heard of. All that was known about the Atlantic west of the Azores was that it was a sea of darkness, inhabited by monsters and furrowed by enormous waves, and that it fell down the slope of the world so steeply that no ship having once gone down could ever climb up it again. And not only was there reluctance on the part of mariners to engage themselves for the expedition, but also a great shyness on the part of ship-owners to provide ships. This reluctance proved so formidable an impediment that Columbus had to com-

municate with the King and Queen; with the result that on the 23rd of May the population was summoned to the church of Saint George, where the Notary Public read aloud to them the letter from the sovereigns commanding the port to furnish ships and men, and an additional order summoning the town to obey it immediately. An inducement was provided in the offer of a free pardon to all criminals and persons under sentence who chose to enlist.

Still the thing hung fire; and on June 20 a new and peremptory order was issued by the Crown authorising Columbus to impress the vessels and crew if necessary. Time was slipping away; and in his difficulty Columbus turned to Martin Alonso Pinzon, upon whose influence and power in the town he could count. There were three brothers then in this family — Martin Alonso, Vincenti Yañez, and Francisco Martin, all pilots themselves and owners of ships. These three brothers saw some hope of profit out of the enterprise, and they exerted themselves on Christopher's behalf so thoroughly that, not only did they afford him help in the obtaining of ships, men, and supplies, but they all three decided to go with him.

There was one more financial question to be settled— a question that remains for us in considerable obscurity, but was in all probability partly settled by the aid of these brothers. The total cost of the expedition, consisting of three ships, wages of the crew, stores and provisions, was 1,167,542 maravedis, about £950 or

$4580. After all these years of pleading at Court, all the disappointments and deferred hopes and sacrifices made by Columbus, the smallness of this sum cannot but strike us with amazement. Many a nobleman that Columbus must have rubbed shoulders with in his years at Court could have furnished the whole sum out of his pocket and never missed it; yet Columbus had to wait years and years before he could get it from the Crown. Still more amazing, this sum was not all provided by the Crown; 167,000 maravedis were found by Columbus, and the Crown only contributed one million maravedis. One can only assume that Columbus's pertinacity in petitioning the King and Queen to undertake the expedition, when he could with comparative ease have got the money from some of his noble acquaintance, was due to three things—his faith and belief in his Idea, his personal ambition, and his personal greed. He believed in his Idea so thoroughly that he knew he was going to find something across the Atlantic. Continents and islands cannot for long remain in the possession of private persons; they are the currency of crowns; and he did not want to be left in the lurch if the land he hoped to discover should be seized or captured by Spain or Portugal. The result of his discoveries, he was convinced, was going to be far too large a thing to be retained and controlled by any machinery less powerful than that of a kingdom; therefore he was unwilling to accept either preliminary assistance or subsequent rewards from any but the same powerful hand. Admiralties,

moreover, and Governor-Generalships and Viceroyships cannot be conferred by counts and dukes, however powerful; the very title Don could only be conferred by one power in Spain; and all the other titles and dignities that Columbus craved with all his Genoese soul were to be had from the hands of kings, and not from plutocrats. It was characteristic of him all his life never to deal with subordinates, but always to go direct to the head man; and when the whole purpose and ambition of his life was to be put to the test it was only consistent in him, since he could not be independent, to go forth under the protection of the united Crown of Aragon and Castile. Where or how he raised his share of the cost is not known; it is possible that his old friend the Duke of Medina Celi came to his help, or that the Pinzon family, who believed enough in the expedition to risk their lives in it, lent some of the necessary money.

Ever since ships were in danger of going to sea short-handed methods of recruiting and manning them have been very much the same; and there must have been some hot work about the harbour of Palos in the summer of 1492. The place was in a panic. It is highly probable that many of the volunteers were a ruffianly riff-raff from the prisons, to whom personal freedom meant nothing but a chance of plunder; and the recruiting office in Palos must have seen many a

picturesque scoundrel coming and taking the oath and making his mark. The presence of these adventurers, many of them entirely ignorant of the sea, would not be exactly an encouragement to the ordinary seaman. It is here very likely that the influence of the Pinzon family was usefully applied. I call it influence, since that is a polite term which covers the application of force in varying degrees; and it was an awkward thing for a Palos sailor to offend the Pinzons, who owned and controlled so much of the shipping in the port. Little by little the preparations went on. In the purchasing of provisions and stores the Pinzons were most helpful to Columbus and, it is not improbable, to themselves also. They also procured the ships; altogether, in the whole history of the fitting out of expeditions, I know nothing since the voyage of the Ark which was so well kept within one family. Moreover it is interesting to notice, since we know the names and places of residence of all the members of the expedition,[1] that the Pinzons, who personally commanded two of the caravels, had them almost exclusively manned by sailors from Palos, while the Admiral's ship was manned by a miscellaneous crew from other places. To be sure they gave the Admiral the biggest ship, but (in his own words) it proved "a dull sailer and unfit for discovery"; while they commanded the two caravels, small and open, but much faster and handier. Clearly these Pinzons will take no harm from a little watching. They may be honest souls

[1] See Appendix E.

enough, but their conduct is just a little suspicious, and we cannot be too careful.

Three vessels were at last secured. The first, named the *Santa Maria*, was the largest, and was chosen to be the flagship of Columbus. She was of about one hundred tons burden, and would be about ninety feet in length by twenty feet beam. She was decked over, and had a high poop astern and a high forecastle in the bows. She had three masts, two of them square-rigged, with a latine sail on the mizzen mast; and she carried a crew of fifty-two persons. Where and how they all stowed themselves away is a matter upon which we can only make wondering guesses; for this ship was about the size of an ordinary small coasting schooner, such as is worked about the coasts of these islands with a crew of six or eight men. The next largest ship was the *Pinta*, which was commanded by Martin Alonso Pinzon, who took his brother Francisco with him as sailing-master. The *Pinta* was of fifty tons burden, decked only at the bow and stern, and the fastest of the three ships; she also had three masts. The third ship was a caravel of forty tons and called the *Niña;* she belonged to Juan Niño of Palos. She was commanded by Vincenti Pinzon, and had a complement of eighteen men. Among the crew of the flagship, whose names and places of residence are to be found in the Appendix, were an Englishman and an Irishman. The Englishman is entered as Tallarte

de Lajes (*Ingles*), who has been ingeniously identified with a possible Allard or Æthelwald of Winchelsea, there having been several generations of Allards who were sailors of Winchelsea in the fifteenth century. Sir Clements Markham thinks that this Allard may have been trading to Coruña and have married and settled down at Lajes. There is also Guillermo Ires, an Irishman from Galway.

Allard and William, shuffling into the recruiting office in Palos, doubtless think that this is a strange place for them to meet, and rather a wild business that they are embarked upon, among all these bloody Spaniards. Somehow I feel more confidence in Allard than in William, knowing, as I do so well, this William of Galway, whether on his native heath or in the strange and distant parts of the world to which his sanguine temperament leads him. Alas, William, you are but the first of a mighty stream that will leave the Old Country for the New World; the world destined to be good for the fortunes of many from the Old Country, but for the Old Country itself not good. Little does he know, drunken William, willing to be on hand where there is adventure brewing, and to be after going with the boys and getting his health on the salt water, what a path of hope for those who go, and of heaviness for those who stay behind, he is opening up. . . . Farewell, William; I hope you were not one of those whom they let out of gaol.

June slid into July, and still the preparations were not complete. Down on the mud banks of the Tinto, where at low water the vessels were left high and dry, and where the caulking and re-fitting were in hand, there was trouble with the workmen. Gomaz Rascon and Christoval Quintero, the owners of the *Pinta*, who had resented her being pressed into the service, were at the bottom of a good deal of it. Things could not be found; gear mysteriously gave way after it had been set up; the caulking was found to have been carelessly and imperfectly done; and when the caulkers were commanded to do it over again they decamped. Even the few volunteers, the picked hands upon whom Columbus was relying, gave trouble. In those days of waiting there was too much opportunity for talk in the shore-side wine-shops; some of the volunteers repented and tried to cry off their bargains; others were dissuaded by their relatives, and deserted and hid themselves. No mild measures were of any use; a reign of terror had to be established; and nothing short of the influence of the Pinzons was severe enough to hold the company together. To these vigorous measures, however, all opposition gradually yielded. By the end of July the provisions and stores were on board, the whole complement of eighty-seven persons collected and enlisted, and only the finishing touches left for Columbus. It is a sign of the distrust and fear evinced with regard to this expedition, that no priest accompanied it—something of a sorrow to pious Christopher, who would have liked

his chaplain. There were two surgeons, or barbers, and a physician; there were an overseer, a secretary, a master-at-arms; there was an interpreter to speak to the natives of the new lands in Hebrew, Greek, German, Chaldean or Arabic; and there was an assayer and silversmith to test the quality of the precious metals that they were sure to find. Up at La Rabida, with the busy and affectionate assistance of the old Prior, Columbus made his final preparations. Ferdinand was to stay at Cordova with Beatriz, and to go to school there; while Diego was already embarked upon his life's voyage, having been appointed a page to the Queen's son, Prince Juan, and handed over to the care of some of the Court ladies. The course to be sailed was talked over and over again; the bearings and notes of the pilot at Porto Santo consulted and discussed; and a chart was made by Columbus himself, and copied with his own hands for use on the three ships.

On the 2nd of August everything was ready; the ships moored out in the stream, the last stragglers of the crew on board, the last sack of flour and barrel of beef stowed away. Columbus confessed himself to the Prior of La Rabida—a solemn moment for him in the little chapel up on the pine-clad hill. His last evening ashore would certainly be spent at the monastery, and his last counsels taken with Perez and Doctor Hernandez. We can hardly realise the feelings of Christopher on the

eve of his departure from the land where all his roots were, to a land of mere faith and conjecture. Even to-day, when the ocean is furrowed by crowded highways, and the earth is girdled with speaking wires, and distances are so divided and reduced that the traveller need never be very long out of touch with his home, few people can set out on a long voyage without some emotional disturbance, however slight it may be; and to Columbus on this night the little town upon which he looked down from the monastery, which had been the scene of so many delays and difficulties and vexations, must have seemed suddenly dear and familiar to him as he realised that after to-morrow its busy and well-known scenes might be for ever a thing of the past to him. Behind him, living or dead, lay all he humanly loved and cared for; before him lay a voyage full of certain difficulties and dangers; dangers from the ships, dangers from the crews, dangers from the weather, dangers from the unknown path itself; and beyond them, a twinkling star on the horizon of his hopes, lay the land of his belief. That he meant to arrive there and to get back again was beyond all doubt his firm intention; and in the simple grandeur of that determination the weaknesses of character that were grouped about it seem unimportant. In this starlit hour among the pine woods his life came to its meridian; everything that was him was at its best and greatest there. Beneath him, on the talking tide of the river, lay the ships and equipment that represented years of steady effort and persistence;

before him lay the pathless ocean which he meant to cross by the inner light of his faith. What he had suffered, he had suffered by himself; what he had won, he had won by himself; what he was to finish, he would finish by himself.

But the time for meditations grows short. Lights are moving about in the town beneath; there is an unwonted midnight stir and bustle; the whole population is up and about, running hither and thither with lamps and torches through the starlit night. The tide is flowing; it will be high water before dawn; and with the first of the ebb the little fleet is to set sail. The stream of hurrying sailors and townspeople sets towards the church of Saint George, where mass is to be said and the Sacrament administered to the voyagers. The calls and shouts die away; the bell stops ringing; and the low muttering voice of the priest is heard beginning the Office. The light of the candles shines upon the gaudy roof, and over the altar upon the wooden image of Saint George vanquishing the dragon, upon which the eyes of Christopher rested during some part of the service, and where to-day your eyes may rest also if you make that pilgrimage. The moment approaches; the bread and the wine are consecrated; there is a shuffling of knees and feet; and then a pause. The clear notes of the bell ring out upon the warm dusky silence—once, twice, thrice; the living God and the cold presence of

dawn enter the church together. Every head is bowed; and for once at least every heart of that company beats in unison with the rest. And then the Office goes on, and the dark-skinned congregation streams up to the sanctuary and receives the Communion, while the blue light of dawn increases and the candles pale before the coming day. And then out again to the boats with shoutings and farewells, for the tide has now turned; hoisting of sails and tripping of anchors and breaking out of gorgeous ensigns; and the ships are moving! The *Maria* leads, with the sign of the Redemption painted on her mainsail and the standard of Castile flying at her mizzen; and there is cheering from ships and from shore, and a faint sound of bells from the town of Huelva.

Thus, the sea being calm, and a fresh breeze blowing off the land, did Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos at sunrise on Friday the 3rd of August 1492.

CHAPTER XIII

EVENTS OF THE FIRST VOYAGE

"IN NOMINE D.N. JESU CHRISTI.—Friday, August 3, 1492, at eight o'clock we started from the bar of Saltes. We went with a strong sea breeze sixty miles, which are fifteen leagues,[1] towards the south, until sunset: afterwards to the south-west and to the south, quarter south-west, which was the way to the Canaries."

With these rousing words the Journal[2] of Columbus's voyage begins; and they sound a salt and mighty chord which contains the true diapason of the symphony of

[1] Columbus reckoned in Italian miles, of which four = one league.

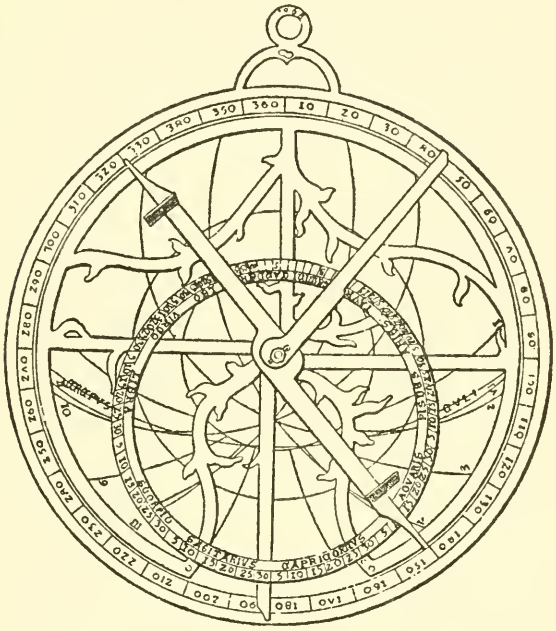
[2] The account of Columbus's first voyage is taken from a Journal written by himself, but which in its original form does not exist. Las Casas had it in his possession, but as he regarded it (no doubt with justice) as too voluminous and discursive to be interesting, he made an abridged edition, in which the exact words of Columbus were sometimes quoted, but which for the most part is condensed into a narrative in the third person. This abridged Journal, consisting of seventy-six closely written folios, was first published by Navarrette in 1825. When Las Casas wrote his *Historie*, however, he appears here and there to have restored sections of the original Journal into the abridged one; and many of these restorations are of importance. If the whole account of his voyage written by Columbus himself were available in its exact form I would print it here; but as it is not, I think it better to continue my narrative, simply using the Journal of Las Casas as a document.

his voyages. There could not have been a more fortunate beginning, with clear weather and a calm sea, and the wind in exactly the right quarter. On Saturday and Sunday the same conditions held, so there was time and opportunity for the three very miscellaneous ships' companies to shake down into something like order, and for all the elaborate discipline of sea life to be arranged and established; and we may employ the interval by noting what aids to navigation Columbus had at his disposal.[1]

The chief instrument was the astrolabe, which was an improvement on the primitive quadrant then in use for taking the altitude of the sun. The astrolabe, it will be remembered, had been greatly improved by Martin Behaim and the Portuguese Commission in 1840; and it was this instrument, a simplification of the astrolabe used in astronomy ashore, that Columbus chiefly used in getting his solar altitudes. As will be seen from the illustration, its broad principle was that of a metal circle with a graduated circumference and two arms pivoted in the centre. It was made as heavy as possible; and in using it the observer sat on deck with his back against the mainmast and with his left hand held up the instrument by the ring at the top. The long arm was moved round until the two sights fixed upon it were on with the sun. The point where the other arm then cut

[1] See Note by the Earl of Dunraven.

the circle gave the altitude. In conjunction with this instrument were used the tables of solar declination compiled by Regiomontanus, and covering the sun's declination between the years 1475 and 1566.

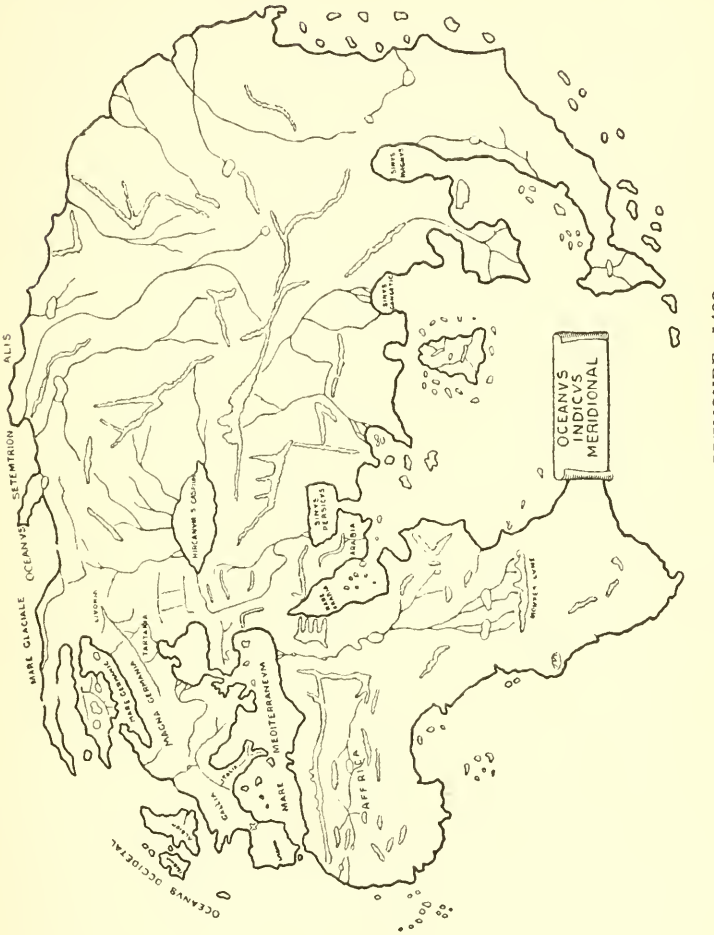


THE SEA ASTROLABE.

The compass in Columbus's day existed, so far as all essentials are concerned, as it exists to-day. Although it lacked the refinements introduced by Lord Kelvin it was swung in double cradles, and had the thirty-two points painted upon a card. The discovery of the

compass, and even of the lodestone, are things wrapt in obscurity; but the lodestone had been known since at least the eleventh century, and the compass certainly since the thirteenth. With the compass were used the sea charts, which were simply maps on a rather larger and more exact scale than the land maps of the period. There were no soundings or currents marked on the old charts, which were drawn on a plane projection; and they can have been of little practical use to navigators except in the case of coasts which were elaborately charted on a large scale. The chart of Columbus, in so far as it was concerned with the ocean westward of the Azores, can of course have contained nothing except the conjectured islands or lands which he hoped to find; possibly the land seen by the ship-wrecked pilot may have been marked on it, and his failure to find that land may have been the reason why, as we shall see, he changed his course to the southward on the 7th of October. It must be remembered that Columbus's conception of the world was that of the Portuguese Mappemonde of 1490, a sketch of which is here reproduced. This conception of the world excluded the Pacific Ocean and the continent of North and South America, and made it reasonable to suppose that any one who sailed westward long enough from Spain would ultimately reach Cathay and the Indies. Behaim's globe, which was completed in the year 1492, represented the farthest point that geographical knowledge had reached previous to the discoveries

of Columbus, and on it is shown the island of Cipango or Japan.



PORTUGUESE MAPPEMONDE, 1490.

By far the most important element in the navigation of Columbus, in so far as estimating his position was

concerned, was what is known as "dead-reckoning"—that is to say, the computation of the distance travelled by the ship through the water. At present this distance is measured by a patent log, which in its commonest form is a propeller-shaped instrument trailed through the water at the end of a long wire or cord the inboard end of which is attached to a registering clock. On being dragged through the water the propeller spins round and the twisting action is communicated by the cord to the clock-work machinery which counts the miles. In the case of powerful steamers and in ordinary weather dead-reckoning is very accurately calculated by the number of revolutions of the propellers recorded in the engine-room; and a device not unlike this was known to the Romans in the time of the Republic. They attached small wheels about four feet in diameter to the sides of their ships; the passage of the water turned the wheels, and a very simple gearing was arranged which threw a pebble into a tallypot at each revolution. This device, however, seems to have been abandoned or forgotten in Columbus's day, when there was no more exact method of estimating dead-reckoning than the primitive one of spitting over the side in calm weather, or at other times throwing some object into the water and estimating the rate of progress by its speed in passing the ship's side. The hour-glass, which was used to get the multiple for long distances, was of course the only portable time-measurer available for Columbus. These, with a rough knowledge of astronomy, and the taking of the altitude

BEHAIM'S GLOBE

of the polar star, were the only known means for ascertaining the position of his ship at sea.

The first mishap occurred on Monday, August 6th, when the *Pinta* carried away her rudder. The *Pinta*, it will be remembered, was commanded by Martin Alonso Pinzon, and was owned by Gomaz Rascon and Christoval Quintero, who had been at the bottom of some of the troubles ashore; and it was thought highly probable that these two rascals had something to do with the mishap, which they had engineered in the hope that their vessel would be left behind at the Canaries. Martin Alonso, however, proved a man of resource, and rigged up a sort of steering gear with ropes. There was a choppy sea, and Columbus could not bring his own vessel near enough to render any assistance, though he doubtless bawled his directions to Pinzon, and looked with a troubled eye on the commotion going on on board the *Pinta*. On the next day the jury-rigged rudder carried away again, and was again repaired, but it was decided to try and make the island of Lanzarote in the Canaries, and to get another caravel to replace the *Pinta*. All through the next day the *Santa Maria* and the *Niña* had to shorten sail in order not to leave the damaged *Pinta* behind; the three captains had a discussion and difference of opinion as to where they were; but Columbus, who was a genius at dead-reckoning, proved to be right in his

surmise, and they came in sight of the Canaries on Thursday morning, August 9th.

Columbus left Pinzon on the Grand Canary with orders to try to obtain a caravel there, while he sailed on to Gomera, which he reached on Sunday night, with a similar purpose. As he was unsuccessful he sent a message by a boat that was going back to tell Pinzon to beach the *Pinta* and repair her rudder; and having spent more days in fruitless search for a vessel, he started back to join Pinzon on August 23rd. During the night he passed the Peak of Teneriffe, which was then in eruption. The repairs to the *Pinta*, doubtless in no way expedited by Messrs. Rascon and Quintera, took longer than had been expected; it was found necessary to make an entirely new rudder for her; and advantage was taken of the delay to make some alterations in the rig of the *Niña*, which was changed from a latine rig to a square rig, so that she might be better able to keep up with the others. September had come before these two jobs were completed; and on the 2nd of September the three ships sailed for Gomera, the most westerly of the islands, where they anchored in the north-east bay. The Admiral was in a great hurry to get away from the islands and from the track of merchant ships, for he had none too much confidence in the integrity of his crews, which were already murmuring and finding every mishap a warning sign from God. He therefore only stayed long enough at Gomera to take in wood and water and provisions, and set sail from that island on the 6th of September.

The wind fell lighter and lighter, and on Friday the little fleet lay becalmed within sight of Ferro. But on Saturday evening north-east airs sprang up again, and they were able to make nine leagues of westing. On Sunday they had lost sight of land; and at thus finding their ships three lonely specks in the waste of ocean the crew lost heart and began to lament. There was something like a panic, many of the sailors bursting into tears and imploring Columbus to take them home again. To us it may seem a rather childish exhibition; but it must be remembered that these sailors were unwillingly embarked upon a voyage which they believed would only lead to death and disaster. The bravest of us to-day, if he found himself press-ganged on board a balloon and embarked upon a journey, the object of which was to land upon Mars or the moon, might find it difficult to preserve his composure on losing sight of the earth; and the parallel is not too extreme to indicate the light in which their present enterprise must have appeared to many of the Admiral's crew.

Columbus gave orders to the captains of the other two ships that, in case of separation, they were to sail westward for 700 leagues—that being the distance at which he evidently expected to find land—and there to lie-to from midnight until morning. On this day also, seeing the temper of the sailors, he began one of the crafty stratagems upon which he prided himself, and which were often undoubtedly of great use to him; he kept two reckonings, one a true one, which he entered in

his log, and one a false one, by means of which the distance run was made out to be less than what it actually was, so that in case he could not make land as soon as he hoped the crew would not be unduly discouraged. In other words, he wished to have a margin at the other end, for he did not want a mutiny when he was perhaps within a few leagues of his destination. On this day he notes that the raw and inexperienced seamen were giving trouble in other ways, and steering very badly, continually letting the ship's head fall off to the north; and many must have been the angry remonstrances from the captain to the man at the wheel. Altogether rather a trying day for Christopher, who surely has about as much on his hands as ever mortal had; but he knows how to handle ships and how to handle sailors, and so long as this ten-knot breeze lasts, he can walk the high poop of the *Santa Maria* with serenity, and snap his fingers at the dirty rabble below.

On Monday they made sixty leagues, the Admiral duly announcing forty-eight; on Tuesday twenty leagues, published as sixteen; and on this day they saw a large piece of a mast which had evidently belonged to a ship of at least 120 tons burden. This was not an altogether cheerful sight for the eighteen souls on board the little *Niña*, who wondered ruefully what was going to happen to them of forty tons when ships three times their size had evidently been unable to live in this abominable sea!

On Thursday, September 13th, when Columbus took his observations, he made a great scientific discovery, although he did not know it at the time. He noticed that the needle of the compass was declining to the west of north instead of having a slight declination to the east of north, as all mariners knew it to have. In other words, he had passed the line of true north and of no variation, and must therefore have been in latitude 28° N. and longitude 29° 37′ W. of Greenwich. With his usual secrecy he said nothing about it; perhaps he was waiting to see if the pilots on the other ships had noticed it, but apparently they were not so exact in their observations as he was. On the next day, Friday, the wind falling a little lighter, they made only twenty leagues. "Here the persons on the caravel *Niña* said they had seen a jay and a ringtail, and these birds never come more than twenty-five leagues from land at most."—Unhappy "persons on the *Niña*"! Nineteen souls, including the captain, afloat in a very small boat, and arguing God knows what from the fact that a jay and a ringtail never went more than twenty-five leagues from land!—The next day also was not without its incident; for on Saturday evening they saw a meteor, or "marvellous branch of fire" falling from the serene violet of the sky into the sea.

They were now well within the influence of the trade-wind, which in these months blows steadily from the east, and maintains an exquisite and balmy climate. Even the Admiral, never very communicative about his

sensations, deigns to mention them here, and is reported to have said that "it was a great pleasure to enjoy the morning; that nothing was lacking except to hear the nightingales, and that the weather was like April in Andalusia." On this day they saw some green grasses, which the Admiral considered must have floated off from some island; "not the continent," says the Admiral, whose theories are not to be disturbed by a piece of grass, "because I make the continental land farther onward." The crew, ready to take the most depressing and pessimistic view of everything, considered that the lumps of grass belonged to rocks or submerged lands, and murmured disparaging things about the Admiral. As a matter of fact these grasses were masses of seaweed detached from the Sargasso Sea, which they were soon to enter.

On Monday, September 17th, four days after Columbus had noted it, the other pilots noted the declination of the needle, which they had found on taking the position of the North star. They did not like it; and Columbus, whose knowledge of astronomy came to his aid, ordered them to take the position of the North star at dawn again, which they did, and found that the needles were true. He evidently thought it useless to communicate to them his scientific speculations, so he explained to them that it was the North star which was moving in its circle, and not the compass. One is compelled to admit that in these little matters of deceit the Admiral always shone. To-day, among the seaweed on the ship's side, he picked

up a little crayfish, which he kept for several days, presumably in a bottle in his cabin; and perhaps afterwards ate.

So for several days this calm and serene progress westward was maintained. The trade-wind blew steady and true, balmy and warm also; the sky was cloudless, except at morning and evening dusk; and there were for scenery those dazzling expanses of sea and sky, and those gorgeous hues of dawn and sunset, which are only to be found in the happy latitudes. The things that happened to them, the bits of seaweed and fishes that they saw in the water, the birds that flew around them, were observed with a wondering attention and wistful yearning after their meaning such as is known only to children and to sailors adventuring on uncharted seas. The breezes were milder even than those of the Canaries, and the waters always less salt; and the men, forgetting their fears of the monsters of the Sea of Darkness, would bathe alongside in the limpid blue. The little crayfish was a "sure indication of land"; a tunny fish, killed by the company on the *Niña*, was taken to be an indication from the west, "where I hope in that exalted God, in whose hands are all victories, that land will very soon appear"; they saw another ringtail, "which is not accustomed to sleep on the sea"; two pelicans came to the ship, "which was an indication that land was near"; a large dark cloud appeared to the north, "which is a sign that land is near"; they saw one day a great deal

of grass, "although the previous day they had not seen any"; they took a bird with their hands which was like a jay; "it was a river bird and not a sea bird"; they saw a whale, "which is an indication that they are near land, because they always remain near it"; afterwards a pelican came from the west-north-west and went to the south-east, "which was an indication that it left land to the west-north-west, because these birds sleep on land and in the morning they come to the sea in search of food, and do not go twenty leagues from land." And "at dawn two or three small land birds came singing to the ships; and afterwards disappeared before sunrise."

Such beautiful signs, interpreted by the light of their wishes, were the events of this part of the voyage. In the meantime, they have their little differences. Martin Alonso Pinzon, on Tuesday, September 18th, speaks from the *Pinta* to the *Santa Maria*, and says that he will not wait for the others, but will go and make the land, since it is so near; but apparently he does not get very far out of the way, the wind which wafts him wafting also the *Santa Maria* and the *Niña*.

On September the 19th there was a comparison of dead-reckonings. The *Niña's* pilot made it 440 leagues from the Canaries, the *Pinta's* 420 leagues, and the Admiral's pilot, doubtless instructed by the Admiral, made it 400. On Sunday the 23rd they were getting into the seaweed and finding crayfish again; and there

being no reasonable cause for complaint a scare was got up among the crew on an exceedingly ingenious point. The wind having blown steadily from the east for a matter of three weeks, they said that it would never blow in any other direction, and that they would never be able to get back to Spain; but later in the afternoon the sea got up from the westward, as though in answer to their fears, and as if to prove that somewhere or other ahead of them there was a west wind blowing; and the Admiral remarks that "the high sea was very necessary to me, as it came to pass once before in the time when the Jews went out of Egypt with Moses, who took them from captivity." And indeed there was something of Moses in this man, who thus led his little rabble from a Spanish seaport out across the salt wilderness of the ocean, and interpreted the signs for them, and stood between them and the powers of vengeance and terror that were set about their uncharted path.

But it appears that the good Admiral had gone just a little too far in interpreting everything they saw as a sign that they were approaching land; for his miserable crew, instead of being comforted by this fact, now took the opportunity to be angry because the signs were not fulfilled. The more the signs pointed to their nearness to land, the more they began to murmur and complain because they did not see it. They began to form together in little groups—always an ominous sign at sea—and even at night those who were not on deck got together in murmuring companies. Some of the things

that they said, indeed, were not very far from the truth; among others, that it was "a great madness on their part to venture their lives in following out the madness of a foreigner who to make himself a great lord had risked his life, and now saw himself and all of them in great exigency and was deceiving so many people." They remembered that his proposition, or "dream" as they not inaptly call it, had been contradicted by many great and lettered men; and then followed some very ominous words indeed. They held[1] that "it was enough to excuse them from whatever might be done in the matter that they had arrived where man had never dared to navigate, and that they were not obliged to go to the end of the world, especially as, if they delayed more, they would not be able to have provisions to return." In short, the best thing would be to throw him into the sea some night, and make a story that he had fallen into the water while taking the position of a star with his astrolabe; and no one would ask any questions, as he was a foreigner. They carried this talk to the Pinzons, who listened to them; after all, we have not had to wait long for trouble with the Pinzons! "Of these Pinzons Christopher Columbus complains greatly, and of the trouble they had given him."

There is only one method of keeping down mutiny at sea, and of preserving discipline. It is hard enough where the mutineers are all on one ship and the com-

[1] The substance of these murmurings is not in the abridged Journal, but is given by Las Casas under the date of September 24.

mander's officers are loyal to him; but when they are distributed over three ships, the captains of two of which are willing to listen to them, the problem becomes grave indeed. We have no details of how Columbus quieted them; but it is probable that his strong personality awed them, while his clever and plausible words persuaded them. He was the best sailor of them all and they knew it; and in a matter of this kind the best and strongest man always wins, and can only in a pass of this kind maintain his authority by proving his absolute right to it. So he talked and persuaded and bullied and encouraged and cheered them; "laughing with them," as Las Casas says, "while he was weeping at heart."

Probably as a result of this unpleasantness there was on the following day, Tuesday, September 25th, a consultation between Martin Alonso Pinzon and the Admiral. The *Santa Maria* closed up with the *Pinta*, and a chart was passed over on a cord. There were islands marked on the chart in this region, possibly the islands reported by the shipwrecked pilot, possibly the island of Antilla; and Pinzon said he thought that they were somewhere in the region of them, and the Admiral said that he thought so too. There was a deal of talk and pricking of positions on charts; and then, just as the sun was setting, Martin Alonso, standing on the stern of the *Pinta*, raised a shout and said that he saw land; asking (business-like Martin) at the same time for the reward

which had been promised to the first one who should see land. They all saw it, a low cloud to the south-west, apparently about twenty-five leagues distant; and honest Christopher, in the emotion of the moment, fell on his knees in gratitude to God. The crimson sunset of that evening saw the rigging of the three ships black with eager figures, and on the quiet air were borne the sounds of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, which was repeated by each ship's company.

The course was altered to the south-west, and they sailed in that direction seventeen leagues during the night; but in the morning there was no land to be seen. The sunset clouds that had so often deceived the dwellers in the Canaries and the Azores, and that in some form or other hover at times upon all eagerly scanned horizons, had also deceived Columbus and every one of his people; but they created a diversion which was of help to the Admiral in getting things quiet again, for which in his devout soul he thanked the merciful providence of God.

And so they sailed on again on a westward course. They were still in the Sargasso Sea, and could watch the beautiful golden floating mass of the gulf-weed, covered with berries and showing, a little way under the clear water, bright green leaves. The sea was as smooth as the river in Seville; there were frigate pelicans flying about, and John Dorys in the water; several gulls were seen; and a youth on board the *Niña* killed a pelican with a stone. On Monday, October 1st, there was a heavy shower of rain; and Juan de la Cosa, Columbus's

pilot, came up to him with the doleful information that they had run 578 leagues from the island of Ferro. According to Christopher's doctored reckoning the distance published was 584 leagues; but his true reckoning, about which he said nothing to a soul, showed that they had gone 707 leagues. The breeze still kept steady and the sea calm; and day after day, with the temper of the crews getting uglier and uglier, the three little vessels forged westward through the blue, weed-strewn waters, their tracks lying undisturbed far behind them. On Saturday, October 6th, the Admiral was signalled by Alonso Pinzon, who wanted to change the course to the south-west. It appears that, having failed to find the islands of the shipwrecked pilot, they were now making for the island of Cipango, and that this request of Pinzon had something to do with some theory of his that they had better turn to the south to reach that island; while Columbus's idea now evidently was to push straight on to the mainland of Cathay. Columbus had his way; but the grumbling and murmuring increased among the crew.

On the next day, Sunday, and perhaps just in time to avert another outbreak, there was heard the sound of a gun, and the watchers on the *Santa Maria* and the *Pinta* saw a puff of smoke coming from the *Niña*, which was sailing ahead, and hoisting a flag on her masthead. This was the signal agreed upon for the discovery of land, and it seemed as though their search was at last at an end. But it was a mistake. In the afternoon

the land that the people of the *Niña* thought they had seen had disappeared, and the horizon was empty except for a great flight of birds that was seen passing from the north to the south-west. The Admiral, remembering how often birds had guided the Portuguese in the islands in their possessions, argued that the birds were either going to sleep on land or were perhaps flying from winter, which he assumed to be approaching in the land from whence they came. He therefore altered his course from west to west-south-west. This course was entered upon an hour before sunset and continued throughout the night and the next day. "The sea was like the river of Seville," says the Admiral; "the breezes as soft as at Seville in April, and very fragrant." More birds were to be seen, and there were many signs of land; but the crew, so often disappointed in their hopeful interpretations of the phenomena surrounding them, kept on murmuring and complaining. On Tuesday, October 9th, the wind chopped round a little and the course was altered, first to south-west and then at evening to a point north of west; and the Journal records that "all night they heard birds passing." The next day Columbus resumed the west-south-westerly course and made a run of fifty-nine leagues; but the mariners broke out afresh in their discontent, and declined to go any farther. They complained of the long voyage, and expressed their views strongly to the commander. But they had to deal with a man who was determined to begin with, and who saw in the many signs of land that they had met with only

an additional inducement to go on. He told them firmly that with or without their consent he intended to go on until he had found the land he had come to seek.

The next day, Thursday, October 11th, was destined to be for ever memorable in the history of the world. It began ordinarily enough, with a west-south-west wind blowing fresh, and on a sea rather rougher than they had had lately. The people on the *Santa Maria* saw some petrels and a green branch in the water; the *Pinta* saw a reed and two small sticks carved with iron, and one or two other pieces of reeds and grasses that had been grown on shore, as well as a small board. Most wonderful of all, the people of the *Niña* saw "a little branch full of dog roses"; and it would be hard to estimate the sweet significance of this fragment of a wild plant from land to the senses of men who had been so long upon a sea from which they had thought never to land alive. The day drew to its close; and after nightfall, according to their custom, the crew of the ships repeated the *Salve Regina*. Afterwards the Admiral addressed the people and sailors of his ship, "very merry and pleasant," reminding them of the favours God had shown them with regard to the weather, and begging them, as they hoped to see land very soon, within an hour or so, to keep an extra good look-out that night from the forward forecastle; and adding to the reward of an annuity of 10,000

maravedis, offered by the Queen to whoever should sight land first, a gift on his own account of a silk doublet.

The moon was in its third quarter, and did not rise until eleven o'clock. The first part of the night was dark, and there was only a faint starlight into which the anxious eyes of the look-out men peered from the forecastles of the three ships. At ten o'clock Columbus was walking on the poop of his vessel, when he suddenly saw a light right ahead. The light seemed to rise and fall as though it were a candle or a lantern held in some one's hand and waved up and down. The Admiral called Pedro Gutierrez to him and asked him whether he saw anything; and he also saw the light. Then he sent for Rodrigo Sanchez and asked him if he saw the light; but he did not, perhaps because from where he was standing it was occulted. But the others were left in no doubt, for the light was seen once or twice more, and to the eyes of the anxious little group standing on the high stern deck of the *Santa Maria* it appeared unmistakably. The *Niña* was not close at hand, and the *Pinta* had gone on in front hoping to make good her mistake; but there was no doubt on board the *Santa Maria* that the light which they had seen was a light like a candle or a torch waved slowly up and down. They lost the light again; and as the hours in that night stole away and the moon rose slowly in the sky the seamen on the *Santa Maria* must have almost held their breath.

At about two o'clock in the morning the sound of

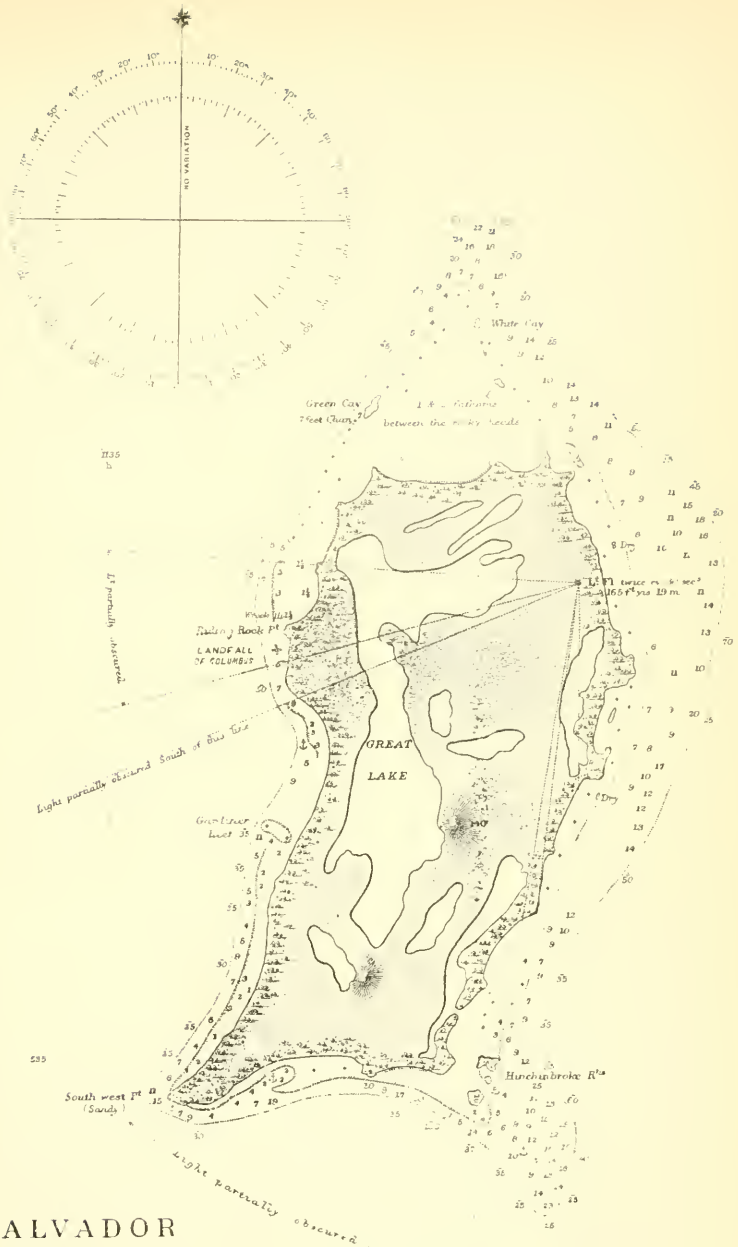
a gun was heard from the *Pinta*, who could be seen hoisting her flags; Rodrigo de Triana, the look-out on board of her, having reported land in sight; and there sure enough in the dim light lay the low shores of an island a few miles ahead of them.

Immediately all sails were lowered, except a small trysail which enabled the ships to lie-to and stand slowly off and on, waiting for the daylight. I suppose there was never a longer night than that; but dawn came at last, flooding the sky with lemon and saffron and scarlet and orange, until at last the pure gold of the sun glittered on the water. And when it rose it showed the sea-weary mariners an island lying in the blue sea ahead of them: the island of Guanahani; San Salvador, as it was christened by Columbus; or, to give it its modern name, Watling's Island.

CHAPTER XIV

LANDFALL

DURING the night the ships had drifted a little with the current, and before the north-east wind. When the look-out man on the *Pinta* first reported land in sight it was probably the north-east corner of the island, where the land rises to a height of 120 feet, that he saw. The actual anchorage of Columbus was most likely to the westward of the island; for there was a strong north-easterly breeze, and as the whole of the eastern coast is fringed by a barrier reef, he would not risk his ships on a lee shore. Finding himself off the north end of the island at sunrise, the most natural thing for him to do, on making sail again, would be to stand southward along the west side of the island looking for an anchorage. The first few miles of the shore have rocky exposed points, and the bank where there is shoal water only extends half a mile from the shore. Immediately beyond that the bottom shelves rapidly down to a depth of 2000 fathoms, so that if Columbus was sounding as he came south he would find no bottom there. Below what are called the Ridings Rocks, however, the land sweeps to the south and east in a long sheltered bay, and to the south of



SAN SALVADOR
OR
WATLING ISLAND

(The Landfall of Columbus 1492.)

Light. Lat 24°5.30' N. Long 74°26.10' W (approx.)

Cables 10 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 Sea Miles

Natural Scale 165,000

these rocks there is good anchorage and firm holding-ground in about eight fathoms of water.

We may picture them, therefore, approaching this land in the bright sunshine of the early morning, their ears, that had so long heard nothing but the slat of canvas and the rush and bubble of water under the prows, filled at last with the great resounding roar of the breakers on the coral reef; their eyes, that had so long looked upon blue emptiness and the star-spangled violet arch of night, feasting upon the living green of the foliage ashore; and the easterly breeze carrying to their eager nostrils the perfumes of land. Amid an excitement and joyful anticipation that it is exhilarating even to think about the cables were got up and served and coiled on deck, and the anchors, which some of them had thought would never grip the bottom again, unstopped and cleared. The leadsman of the *Santa Maria*, who has been finding no bottom with his forty-fathom line, suddenly gets a sounding; the water shoals rapidly until the nine-fathom mark is unwetted, and the lead comes up with its bottom covered with brown ooze. Sail is shortened; one after another the great ungainly sheets of canvas are clewed up or lowered down on deck; one after another the three helms are starboarded, and the three ships brought up to the wind. Then with three mighty splashes that send the sea birds whirling and screaming above the rocks the anchors go down; and the Admiral stands on his high poop-deck, and looks long and searchingly at the fragment of earth,

rock-rimmed, surf-fringed, and tree-crowned, of which he is Viceroy and Governor-General.

Watling's Island, as it is now called, or San Salvador, as Columbus named it, or Guanahani, as it was known to the aborigines, is situated in latitude 24° 6′ N., and longitude 74° 26′ W., and is an irregularly shaped white sandstone islet in about the middle of the great Bahama Bank. The space occupied by the whole group is shaped like an irregular triangle extending from the Navidad Bank in the Caribbean Sea at the south-east corner, to Bahama Island in Florida Strait on the north, about 200 miles. The south side trends west by north for 600 miles, and the north side north-west by north 720 miles. Most of the islands and small rocks in this group, called Keys or Cays, are very low, and rise only a few feet above the sea; the highest is about 400 feet high. They are generally situated on the edge of coral and sand banks, some of which are of a very dangerous character. They are thinly wooded, except in the case of one or two of the larger islands which contain timber of moderate dimensions. The climate of the Bahamas is mild and temperate, with refreshing sea breezes in the hottest months; and there is a mean temperature of 75° from November to April. Watling's Island is about twelve miles in length by six in breadth, with rocky shores slightly indented. The greater part of its area is occupied by salt-water lagoons, separated from one another

by small wooded hills from 100 to 140 feet high. There is plenty of grass; indeed the island is now considered to be the most fertile in the Bahamas, and raises an excellent breed of cattle and sheep. In common with the other islands of the group it was orginally settled by the Spaniards, and afterwards by the British, who were driven from the Bahamas again by the Spanish in the year 1641. After a great deal of changing hands they were ceded to Great Britain in 1783, and have remained in her possession ever since. In 1897 the population of the whole group was estimated at 52,000 the whites being in the proportion of one to six of the coloured population. Watling's Island contains about 600 inhabitants scattered over the surface, with a small settlement called Cockburn Town on the west side, nearly opposite the landfall of Columbus. The seat of the local government is in the island of New Providence, and the inhabitants of Watling's Island and of Rum Cay unite in sending one representative to the House of Assembly. It is high water, full and change, at Watling's Island at 7 h. 40 m., as it was in the days of Columbus; and these facts form about the sum of the world's knowledge of and interest in Watling's Island to-day.

But it was a different matter on Friday morning, October 12,[1] 1492, when, all having been made snug

[1] This date is reckoned in the old style. The true astronomical date would be October 21st, which is the modern anniversary of the discovery.

on board the *Santa Maria*, the Admiral of the Ocean Seas put on his armour and his scarlet cloak over it and prepared to go ashore. The boat was lowered and manned by a crew well armed, and Columbus took with him Rodrigo de Escovedo, the secretary to the expedition, and Rodrigo Sanchez his overseer; they also took on board Martin Alonso Pinzon and Vincenti Yañez Pinzon, the captains of the other two ships. As they rowed towards the shore they saw a few naked inhabitants, who hid themselves at their approach. Columbus carried with him the royal standard, and the two captains each had a banner of the expedition, which was a square flag with an "F" and a "Y" upon either side, each letter being surmounted by the crown of the sovereigns and a green cross covering the whole. Columbus assembled his little band around him and called upon them to bear witness that in the presence of them all he was taking possession of the island for the King and Queen of Spain; duly making depositions in writing on the spot, and having them signed and witnessed. Then he gave the name of San Salvador to the island and said a prayer; and while this solemn little ceremony was in progress, the astonished natives crept out of their hiding and surrounded the strange white men. They gesticulated and grovelled and pointed upwards, as though this gang of armed and bearded Spaniards, with the tall white-bearded Italian in the midst of them, had fallen from the skies.

The first interest of the voyagers was in the inhabi-

tants of this delightful land. They found them well-built, athletic-looking men, most of them young, with handsome bodies and intelligent faces. Columbus, eager to begin his missionary work, gave them some red caps and some glass beads, with which he found them so delighted that he had good hopes of making converts, and from which he argued that "they were a people who would better be freed and converted to our Holy Faith by love than by force," which sentence of his contains within itself the whole missionary spirit of the time. These natives, who were the freest people in the world, were to be "freed"; freed or saved from the darkness of their happy innocence and brought to the light of a religion that had just evolved the Inquisition; freed by love if possible, and by red caps and glass beads; if not possible, then freed by force and with guns; but freed they were to be at all costs. It is a tragic thought that, at the very first impact of the Old World upon this Eden of the West, this dismal error was set on foot and the first links in the chain of slavery forged. But for the moment nothing of it was perceptible; nothing but red caps and glass beads, and trinkets and toys, and freeing by love. The sword that Columbus held out to them, in order to find out if they knew the use of weapons, they innocently grasped by the blade and so cut their fingers; and that sword, extended with knowledge and grasped with fearless ignorance, is surely an emblem of the spread of civilisation and of its doubtful blessings in the early stages. Let us hear Columbus

himself, as he recorded his first impressions of the natives of Guanahani :—

"Further, it appeared to me that they were a very poor people, in everything. They all go naked as their mothers gave them birth, and the women also, although I only saw one of the latter who was very young, and all those whom I saw were young men, none more than thirty years of age. They were very well built with very handsome bodies, and very good faces. Their hair was almost as coarse as horses' tails, and short, and they wear it over the eyebrows, except a small quantity behind, which they wear long and never cut. Some paint themselves blackish, and they are of the colour of the inhabitants of the Canaries, neither black nor white, and some paint themselves white, some red, some whatever colour they find : and some paint their faces, some all the body, some only the eyes, and some only the nose. They do not carry arms nor know what they are, because I showed them swords and they took them by the edge and ignorantly cut themselves. They have no iron : their spears are sticks without iron, and some of them have a fish's tooth at the end and others have other things. They are all generally of good height, of pleasing appearance and well built : I saw some who had indications of wounds on their bodies, and I asked them by signs if it was that, and they showed me that other people came there from other islands near by and wished to capture them and they defended themselves : and I believed and believe, that they come here from the continental land to take them captive. They must be good servants and intelligent, as I see that they very quickly say all that is said to them, and I believe that they would easily become Christians, as it appeared to me that they had no sect. If it please our Lord, at the time of my departure, I will take six of them from here to your Highnesses that they may learn to speak. I saw no beast of any kind except parrots on this island."

They very quickly say all that is said to them, and they will very easily become good slaves; good Christians also it appears, since the Admiral's research does not reveal the trace of any religious sect. And finally "I will take six of them"; ostensibly that they may learn to speak the language, but really that they may form the vanguard of cargo after cargo of slaves ravished from their happy islands of dreams and sunshine and plenty to learn the blessings of Christianity under the whip and the sword. It is all, alas, inevitable; was inevitable from the moment that the keel of Columbus's boat grated upon the shingle of Guanahani. The greater must prey upon the less, the stronger must absorb and dominate the weaker; and the happy gardens of the Golden Cyclades must be spoiled and wasted for the pleasure and enrichment of a corrupting civilisation. But while we recognise the inevitable, and enter into the joy and pride of Columbus and his followers on this first happy morning of their landing, we may give a moment's remembrance to the other side of the picture, and admit that for this generation of innocents the discovery that was to be all gain for the Old World was to be all loss to them. In the meantime, decrees the Admiral, they are to be freed and converted; and "I will take six of them that they may learn to speak."

There are no paths or footprints left in the sea, and the water furrowed on that morning more than four

hundred years ago by the keels of Columbus's little fleet is as smooth and trackless as it was before they clove it. Yet if you approach Guanahani from the east during the hours of darkness you also will see a light that waxes and wanes on the horizon. What the light was that Columbus saw is not certain; it was probably the light from a torch held by some native woman from the door of her hut; but the light that you will see is from the lighthouse on Dixon Hill, where a tower of coral holds a lamp one hundred and sixty feet above the sea at the north-east point of the island. It was erected in no sentimental spirit, but for very practical purposes, and at a date when Watling's Island had not been identified with the Guanahani of Columbus's landfall; and yet of all the monuments that have been raised to him I can think of nothing more appropriate than this lonely tower that stands by day amid the bright sunshine in the track of the trade wind, and by night throws its powerful double flash every half-minute across the dark lonely sea. For it was by a light, although not of man's kindling, that Columbus was guided upon his lonely voyage and through his many difficulties; amid all his trials and disappointments, dimly as it must have burned sometimes, it never quite went out. Darkness was the name of the sea across which he took his way; darkness, from his religious point of view, was the state of the lands to which he journeyed; and, whatever its subsequent worth may have been, it was a burning fragment from the living torch of the Christian religion that he carried

across the world with him, and by which he sought to kindle the fire of faith in the lands of his discovery. So that there is a profound symbolism in those raying beams that now, night after night, month by month, and year after year, shine out across the sea from Watling's Island in the direction of the Old World.

In the preparations for this voyage, and in the conduct and accomplishment of it, the personality of the man Columbus stands clearly revealed. He was seen at his best, as all men are who have a chance of doing the thing for which they are best fitted. The singleness of aim that can accomplish so much is made manifest in his dogged search for means with which to make his voyage; and his Italian quality of unscrupulousness in the means employed to attain a good end was exercised to the full. The practical seaman in him carried him through the easiest part of his task, which was the actual sailing of his ships from Palos to Guanahani; Martin Alonso Pinzon could have done as much as that. But no Martin Alonso Pinzon or any other man of that time known to history had the necessary combination of defective and effective qualities that made Columbus, once he had conceived his glorious hazy idea, spend the best years of his life, first in acquiring the position that would make him listened to by people powerful enough to help him, and then in besieging them in the face of every rebuff and discouragement. Another man, pro-

posing to venture across the unknown ocean to unknown lands, would have required a fleet for his conveyance, and an army for his protection; but Columbus asked for what he thought he had some chance of getting, and for the barest equipment that would carry him across the water. Another man would at least have had a body-guard; but Columbus relied upon himself, and alone held his motley crew in the bonds of discipline. A Pinzon could have navigated the fleet from Palos to Guanahani; but only a Columbus, only a man burning with belief in himself and in his quest, could have kept that superstitious crowd of loafers and malefactors and gaol-birds to their duties, and bent them to his will. He was destined in after years for situations which were beyond his power to deal with, and for problems that were beyond his grasp; but here at least he was supreme, master of himself and of his material, and a ruler over circumstances. The supreme thing that he had professed to be able to do and which he had guaranteed to do was, in the sublime simplicity of his own phrase, "to discover new lands," and luck or no luck, help or hindrance, he did it at the very first attempt and in the space of thirty-five days. And although it was from the *Pinta* that the gun was fired, and the first loom of the actual land seen in the early morning, I am glad to think that, of all the number of eager watching men, it was Columbus who first saw the dim tossing light that told him his journey was at an end.

BOOK II

THE NEW WORLD

THEY THAT DWELL IN THE WILDERNESS SHALL KNEEL BEFORE HIM: HIS ENEMIES SHALL LICK THE DUST. THE KINGS OF THARSIS AND OF THE ISLES SHALL GIVE PRESENTS: THE KINGS OF ARABIA AND SABA SHALL BRING GIFTS.

CHAPTER I

THE ENCHANTED ISLANDS

COLUMBUS did not intend to remain long at San Salvador. His landfall there, although it signified the realisation of one part of his dream, was only the starting-point of his explorations in the New World. Now that he had made good his undertaking to "discover new lands," he had to make good his assurance that they were full of wealth and would swell the revenues of the King and Queen of Spain. A brief survey of this first island was all he could afford time for; and after the first exquisite impression of the white beach, and the blue curve of the bay sparkling in the sunshine, and the soft prismatic colours of the acanthus beneath the green wall of the woods had been savoured and enjoyed, he was anxious to push on to the rich lands of the Orient of which he believed this island to be only an outpost.

On the morning after his arrival the natives came crowding down to the beach and got down their canoes, which were dug out of the trunk of a single tree, and some of which were large enough to contain forty or forty-five men. They came paddling out to the ship, sometimes, in the case of the smaller canoes which only

held one man, being upset by the surf, and swimming gaily round and righting their canoes again and bailing them out with gourds. They brought balls of spun cotton, and parrots and spears. All their possessions, indeed, were represented in the offerings they made to the strangers. Columbus, whose eye was now very steadily fixed on the main chance, tried to find out if they had any gold, for he noticed that some of them wore in their noses a ring that looked as though it were made of that metal; and by making signs he asked them if there was any more of it to be had. He understood them to say that to the south of the island there dwelt a king who had large vessels of gold, and a great many of them; he tried to suggest that some of the natives should come and show him the way, but he "saw that they were not interested in going."

The story of the Rheingold was to be enacted over again, and the whole of the evils that followed in its glittering train to be exemplified in this voyage of discovery. To the natives of these islands, who guarded the yellow metal and loved it merely for its shining beauty, it was harmless and powerless; they could not buy anything with it, nor did they seek by its aid to secure any other enjoyments but the happiness of looking at it and admiring it. As soon as the gold was ravished from their keeping, however, began the reign of lust and cruelty that always has attended and always will attend the knowledge that things can be bought with it. In all its history, since first it was brought up from

the dark bowels of the earth to glitter in the light of day, there is no more significant scene than this that took place on the bright sands of San Salvador so long ago — Columbus attentively examining the ring in the nose of a happy savage, and trying to persuade him to show him the place that it was brought from ; and the savage "not interested in going."

From his sign-conversation with the natives Columbus understood that there was land to the south or the south-west, and also to the north-west, and that the people from the north-west went to the south-west in search of gold and precious stones. In the meantime he determined to spend the Sunday in making a survey of the island, while the rest of Saturday was passed in barterings with the natives, who were very happy and curious to see all the strange things belonging to the voyagers ; and so innocent were their ideas of value that "they give all they have for whatever thing may be given them." Columbus, however, who was busy making calculations, would not allow the members of the crew to take anything more on their own account, ordering that where any article of commerce existed in quantity it was to be acquired for the sovereigns and taken home to Spain.

Early on Sunday morning a boat was prepared from each ship, and a little expedition began to row north about the island. As they coasted the white rocky

shores people came running to the beach and calling to them; "giving thanks to God," says Columbus, although this is probably a flight of fancy. When they saw that the boats were not coming to land they threw themselves into the water and came swimming out to them, bringing food and drink. Columbus noticed a tongue of land lying between the north-west arm of the internal lagoon and the sea, and saw that by cutting a canal through it entrance could be secured to a harbour that would float "as many ships as there are in Christendom." He did not, apparently, make a complete circuit of the island, but returned in the afternoon to the ships, having first collected seven natives to take with him, and got under way again; and before night had fallen San Salvador had disappeared below the north-west horizon.

About midday he reached another island to the south-east. He sailed along the coast until evening, when he saw yet another island in the distance to the south-west; and he therefore lay-to for the night. At dawn the next morning he landed on the island and took formal possession of it, naming it Santa Maria de la Concepcion, which is the Rum Cay of the modern charts. As the wind chopped round and he found himself on a lee-shore he did not stay there, but sailed again before night. Two of the unhappy prisoners from Guanahani at this point made good their escape by swimming to a large canoe which one of the natives of the new island had rowed out—a circumstance which worried Columbus not

a little, since he feared it would give him a bad name with the natives. He tried to counteract it by loading with presents another native who came to barter balls of cotton, and sending him away again.

The effect of all that he was seeing, of the bridge of islands that seemed to be stretching towards the south-west and leading him to the region of untold wealth, was evidently very stimulating and exciting to Columbus. His Journal is almost incoherent where he attempts to set down all he has got to say. Let us listen to him for a moment:—

"These islands are very green and fertile, and the breezes are very soft, and there may be many things which I do not know, because I did not wish to stop, in order to discover and search many islands to find gold. And since these people make signs thus, that they wear gold on their arms and legs,—and it is gold, because I showed them some pieces which I have,—I cannot fail, with the aid of our Lord, in finding it where it is native. And being in the middle of the gulf between these two islands, that is to say, the island of *Santa Maria* and this large one, which I named *Fernandina*, I found a man alone in a canoe who was going from the island of *Santa Maria* to *Fernandina*, and was carrying a little of his bread which might have been about as large as the fist, and a gourd of water, and a piece of reddish earth reduced to dust and afterwards kneaded, and some dry leaves[1] which must be a thing very much appreciated among them, because they had already brought me some of them as a present at *San Salvador:* and he was carrying a small basket of their kind, in which he had a string of small glass beads and two blancas, by which I

[1] Tobacco.

knew that he came from the island of *San Salvador*, and had gone from there to *Santa Maria* and was going to *Fernandina*. He came to the ship: I caused him to enter it, as he asked to do so, and I had his canoe placed on the ship and had everything which he was carrying guarded: and I ordered that bread and honey be given him to eat and something to drink. And I will go to *Fernandina* thus and will give him everything which belongs to him, that he may give good reports of us. So that, when your Highnesses send here, our Lord pleasing, those who come may receive honour and the Indians will give them of everything which they have."

This hurried gabbling about gold and the aid of our Lord, interlarded with fragments of natural and geographical observation, sounds strangely across the gulf of time and impresses one with a disagreeable sense of bewildered greed—like that of a dog gulping at the delicacies in his platter and unwilling to do justice to one for fear the others should escape him; and yet it is a natural bewilderment, and one with which we must do our best to sympathise.

Fernandina was the name which Columbus had already given to Long Island when he sighted it from Santa Maria; and he reached it in the evening of Tuesday, October 16th. The man in the canoe had arrived before him; and the astute Admiral had the satisfaction of finding that once more his cleverness had been rewarded, and that the man in the canoe had given such glowing accounts of his generosity that there was no difficulty about his getting water and supplies. While the barrels of water were being filled he landed and strolled about

in the pleasant groves, observing the islanders and their customs, and finding them on the whole a little more sophisticated than those of San Salvador. The women wore mantillas on their heads and "little pieces of cotton" round their loins—a sufficiently odd costume; and they appeared to Columbus to be a little more astute than the other islanders, for though they brought cotton in quantities to the ships they exacted payment of beads for it. In the charm and wonder of his walk in this enchanted land he was able for a moment to forget his hunger for gold and to admire the great branching palm-trees, and the fish that "are here so different from ours that it is wonderful. There are some formed like cocks of the finest colours in the world, blue, yellow, red and of all colours, and others tinted in a thousand manners: and the colours are so fine, that there is not a man who does not wonder at them, and who does not take great pleasure in seeing them. Also, there are whales. I saw no beasts on land of any kind except parrots and lizards. A boy told me that he saw a large snake. I did not see sheep nor goats, nor any other beast; although I have been here a very short time, as it is midday, still if there had been any, I could not have missed seeing some." Columbus was not a very good descriptive writer, and he has but two methods of comparison; either a thing is like Spain, or it is not like Spain. The verdure was "in such condition as it is in the month of May in Andalusia"; and the trees "were all as different from ours as day from

night, and also the fruits and grasses and the stones and all the things." The essay written by a cockney child after a day at the seaside or in the country, is not greatly different from some of the *verbatim* passages of this Journal; and there is a charm in that fact too, for it gives us a picture of Columbus, in spite of his hunt for gold and precious stones, wandering, still a child at heart, in the wonders of the enchanted world to which he had come.

There was trouble on this day, because some of the crew had found an Indian with a piece of gold in his nose, and they got a scolding from Columbus for not detaining him and bartering with him for it. There was bad weather also, with heavy rain and a threatening of tempest; there was a difference of opinion with Martin Alonso Pinzon about which way they should go round the island: but the next day the weather cleared, and the wind settled the direction of their course for them. Columbus, whose eye never missed anything of interest to the sailor and navigator, notes thus early a fact which appears in every book of sailing directions for the Bahama Islands—that the water is so clear and limpid that the bottom can be seen at a great depth; and that navigation is thus possible and even safe among the rock-strewn coasts of the islands, when thus performed by sight and with the sun behind the ship. He was also keenly alive to natural charm and beauty in the new lands that he was visiting, and there are unmistakable fragments of himself in the Journal that speak eloquently of his first

impressions. "The singing of the little birds is such that it appears a man would wish never to leave here, and the flocks of parrots obscure the sun."

But life, even to the discoverer of a New World, does not consist of wandering in the groves, and listening to the singing birds, and smelling the flowers, and remembering the May nights of Andalusia. There was gold to be found and the mainland of Cathay to be discovered, and a letter, written by the sovereigns at his earnest request, to be delivered to the Great Khan. The natives had told him of an island called Samoete to the southward, which was said to contain a quantity of gold. He sailed thither on the 19th, and called it Isabella; its modern name is Crooked Island. He anchored here and found it to be but another step in the ascending scale of his delight; it was greener and more beautiful than any of the islands he had yet seen. He spent some time looking for the gold, but could not find any; although he heard of the island of Cuba, which he took to be the veritable Cipango. He weighed anchor on October 24th and sailed south-west, encountering some bad weather on the way; but on Sunday the 28th he came up with the north coast of Cuba and entered the mouth of a river which is the modern Nuevitas. To the island of Cuba he gave the name of Juana in honour of the young prince to whom his son Diego had been appointed a page.

If the other islands had seemed beautiful to him,

Cuba seemed like heaven itself. The mountains grandly rising in the interior, the noble rivers and long sweeping plains, the headlands melting into the clear water, and the gorgeous colours and flowers and birds and insects on land acted like a charm on Columbus and his sailors. As they entered the river they lowered a boat in order to go ahead and sound for an anchorage; and two native canoes put off from the shore, but, when they saw the boat approaching, fled again. The Admiral landed and found two empty houses containing nets and hooks and fishing-lines, and one of the strange silent dogs, such as they had encountered on the other island—dogs that pricked their ears and wagged their tails, but that never barked. The Admiral, in spite of his greed for gold and his anxiety to "free" the people of the island, was now acting much more discreetly, and with the genuine good sense which he always possessed and which was only sometimes obscured. He would not allow anything in the empty houses to be disturbed or taken away, and whenever he saw the natives he tried to show them that he intended to do them no harm, and to win their good will by making them presents of beads and toys for which he would take no return. As he went on up the river the scenery became more and more enchanting, so that he felt quite unhappy at not being able to express all the wonders and beauties that he saw. In the pure air and under the serene blue of the sky those matchless hues of blossom and foliage threw a rainbow-coloured garment on either bank of the river; the flamingoes, the

parrots and woodpeckers and humming-birds calling to one another and flying among the tree-tops, made the upper air also seem alive and shot with all the colours of the rainbow. Humble Christopher, walking amid these gorgeous scenes, awed and solemnised by the strangeness and magnificence of nature around him, tries to identify something that he knows; and thinks, that amid all these strange chorusings of unknown birds, he hears the familiar note of a nightingale. Amid all his raptures, however, the main chance is not forgotten; everything that he sees he translates into some terms of practical utility. Just as on the voyage out every sea-weed or fish or flying bird that he saw was hailed by him as a sign that land was near, so amid the beauty of this virgin world everything that he sees is taken to indicate either that he is close upon the track of the gold, or that he must be in Cipango, or that the natives will be easy to convert to Christianity. In the fragrance of the woods of Cuba, Columbus thought that he smelled Oriental spices, which Marco Polo had described as abounding in Cipango; when he walked by the shore and saw the shells of pearl oysters, he believed the island to be loaded with pearls and precious stones; when he saw a scrap of tinsel or bright metal adorning a native, he argued that there was a gold mine close at hand. And so he went on in an increasing whirl of bewildering enchantment from anchorage to anchorage and from island to island, always being led on by that yellow will-o'-the-wisp, gold, and always believing that the wealth

of the Orient would be his on the morrow. As he coasted along towards the west he entered the river which he called Rio de Mares. He found a large village here full of palm-branch houses furnished with chairs and hammocks and adorned with wooden masks and statues; but in spite of his gentleness and offer of gifts the inhabitants all fled to the mountains, while he and his men walked curiously through the deserted houses.

On Tuesday, October 30th, Martin Alonso Pinzon, whose communications the Admiral was by this time beginning to dread, came with some exciting news. It seemed that the Indians from San Salvador who were on board the *Pinta* had told him that beyond the promontory, named by Columbus the Cape of Palms, there was a river, four days' journey upon which would bring one to the city of Cuba, which was very rich and large and abounded with gold; and that the king of that country was at war with a monarch whom they called *Cami*, and whom Pinzon identified with the Great Khan. More than this, these natives assured him that the land they were on at present was the mainland itself, and that they could not be very far from Cathay. Columbus for once found himself in agreement with Martin Alonso. The well-thumbed copy of Marco Polo was doubtless brought out, and abundant evidence found in it; and it was decided to despatch a little embassy to this city in order to gain information about its position and wealth. When they continued their course, however, and rounded the cape, no river appeared; they sailed on, and yet promon-

tory after promontory was opened ahead of them; and as the wind turned against them and the weather was very threatening they decided to turn back and anchor again in the Rio de Mares.

Columbus was now, as he thought, hot upon the track of the Great Khan himself; and on the first of November he sent boats ashore and told the sailors to get information from the houses; but the inhabitants fled shyly into the woods. Having once postulated the existence of the Great Khan in this immediate territory Columbus, as his habit was, found that everything fitted with the theory; and he actually took the flight of the natives, although it had occurred on a dozen other occasions, as a proof that they mistook his bands of men for marauding expeditions despatched by the great monarch himself. He therefore recalled them, and sent a boat ashore with an Indian interpreter who, standing in the boat at the edge of the water, called upon the natives to draw near, and harangued them. He assured them of the peaceable intentions of the great Admiral, and that he had nothing whatever to do with the Great Khan; which cannot very greatly have thrilled the Cubans, who knew no more about the Great Khan than they did about Columbus. The interpreter then swam ashore and was well received; so well, that in the evening some sixteen canoes came off to the ships bringing cotton yarn and spears for traffic. Columbus, with great astuteness, forbade any trading in cotton or indeed in anything at all except gold, hoping by this means to

make the natives produce their treasures; and he would no doubt have been successful if the natives had possessed any gold, but as the poor wretches had nothing but the naked skins they stood up in, and the few spears and pots and rolls of cotton that they were offering, the Admiral's astuteness was for once thrown away. There was one man, however, with a silver ring in his nose, who was understood to say that the king lived four days' journey in the interior, and that messengers had been sent to him to tell him of the arrival of the strange ships; which messengers would doubtless soon return bringing merchants with them to trade with the ships. If this native was lying he showed great ingenuity in inventing the kind of story that his questioners wanted; but it is more likely that his utterances were interpreted by Columbus in the light of his own ardent beliefs. At any rate it was decided to send at once a couple of envoys to this great city, and not to wait for the arrival of the merchants. Two Spaniards, Rodrigo de Jerez and Luis de Torres, the interpreter to the expedition — who had so far found little use for his Hebrew and Chaldean—were chosen; and with them were sent two Indians, one from San Salvador and the other a local native who went as guide. Red caps and beads and hawks' bells were duly provided, and a message for the king was given to them telling him that Columbus was waiting with letters and presents from the Spanish sovereigns, which he was to deliver personally.

After the envoys had departed, Columbus, whose ships

were anchored in a large basin of deep water with a clean and steep beach, decided to take the opportunity of having the vessels careened. Their hulls were covered with shell and weed; the caulking, which had been dishonestly done at Palos, had also to be attended to; so the ships were beached and hove down one at a time—an unnecessary precaution, as it turned out, for there was no sign of treachery on the part of the natives. While the men were making fires to heat their tar they noticed that the burning wood sent forth a heavy odour which was like mastic; and the Admiral, now always busy with optimistic calculations, reckoned that there was enough in that vicinity to furnish a thousand quintals every year. While the work on the ships was going forward he employed himself in his usual way, going ashore, examining the trees and vegetables and fruits, and holding such communication as he was able with the natives. He was up every morning at dawn, at one time directing the work of his men, at another going ashore after some birds that he had seen; and as dawn comes early in those islands his day was probably a long one, and it is likely that he was in bed soon after dark. On the day that he went shooting, Martin Alonso Pinzon was waiting for him on his return; this time not to make any difficulties or independent proposals, but to show him two pieces of cinnamon that one of his men had got from an Indian who was carrying a quantity of it. "Why did the man not get it all from him?" says greedy Columbus. "Because of the prohibition of the Admiral's that no one

should do any trading," says Martin Alonso, and conceives himself to have scored; for truly these two men do not love one another. The boatswain of the *Pinta*, adds Martin Alonso, has found whole trees of it. "The Admiral then went there and found that it was not cinnamon." The Admiral was omnipotent; if he had said that it was manna they would have had to make it so, and as he chose to say that it was not cinnamon, we must take his word for it, as Martin Alonso certainly had to do; so that it was the Admiral who scored this time. Columbus, however, now on the track of spices, showed some cinnamon and pepper to the natives; and the obliging creatures "said by signs that there was a great deal of it towards the south-east." Columbus then showed them some gold and pearls; and "certain old men" replied that in a place they called *Bohio* there was any amount of gold; the people wore it in their ears and on their arms and legs, and there were pearls also, and large ships and merchandise—all to the south-east. Finding this information, which was probably entirely untrue and merely a polite effort to do what was expected of them, well received, the natives added that "a long distance from there, there were men with one eye, and other men with dogs' snouts who ate men, and that when they caught a man they beheaded him and drank his blood" . . . Soon after this the Admiral went on board again and began to write up his Journal, solemnly entering all these facts in it. It is the most childish nonsense; but after all, how interesting and credible it

must have been! To live thus smelling the most heavenly perfumes, breathing the most balmy air, viewing the most lovely scenes, and to be always hot upon the track of gold and pearls and spices and wealth and dog-nosed, blood-drinking monstrosities—what an adventure, what a vivid piece of living!

After a few days—on Tuesday, November 6th—the two men who had been sent inland to the great and rich city came back again with their report. Alas for visions of the Great Khan! The city turned out to be a village of fifty houses with twenty people in each house. The envoys had been received with great solemnity; and all the men "as well as the women" came to see them, and lodged them in a fine house. The chief people in the village came and kissed their hands and feet, hailing them as visitors from the skies, and seating them in two chairs, while they sat round on the floor. The native interpreter, doubtless according to instructions, then told them "how the Christians lived and how they were good people"; and I would give a great deal to have heard that brief address. Afterwards the men went out and the women came in, also kissing the hands and feet of the visitors, and "trying them to see if they were of flesh and of bone like themselves." The results were evidently so satisfactory that the strangers were implored to remain at least five days. The real business of the expedition was then broached.

Had they any gold or pearls? Had they any cinnamon or spices? Answer, as usual: "No, but they thought there was a great deal of it to the south-east." The interest of the visitors then evaporated, and they set out for the coast again; but they found that at least five hundred men and women wanted to come with them, since they believed that they were returning to heaven. On their journey back the two Spaniards noticed many people smoking, as the Admiral himself had done a few days before; and this is the first known discovery of tobacco by Europeans. They saw a great many geese, and the strange dogs that did not bark, and they saw potatoes also, although they did not know what they were. Columbus, having heard this report, and contemplating these gentle amiable creatures, so willing to give all they had in return for a scrap of rubbish, feels his heart lifted in a pious aspiration that they might know the benefits of the Christian religion. "I have to say, Most Serene Princes," he writes,

"that by means of devout religious persons knowing their language well, all would soon become Christians: and thus I hope in our Lord that Your Highnesses will appoint such persons with great diligence in order to turn to the Church such great peoples, and that they will convert them, even as they have destroyed those who would not confess the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit: and after their days, as we are all mortal, they will leave their realms in a very tranquil condition and freed from heresy and wickedness, and will be well received before the Eternal Creator, Whom may it please to give them a long life and a great increase of larger realms

and dominions, and the will and disposition to spread the holy Christian religion, as they have done up to the present time, Amen. To-day I will launch the ship and make haste to start on Thursday, in the name of God, to go to the south-east and seek gold and spices, and discover land."

Thus Christopher Columbus, in the Name of God, November 11, 1492.

CHAPTER II

THE EARTHLY PARADISE

WHEN Columbus weighed anchor on the 12th of November he took with him six captive Indians. It was his intention to go in search of the island of Babeque, which the Indians alleged lay about thirty leagues to the east-south-east, and where, they said, the people gathered gold out of the sand with candles at night, and afterwards made bars of it with a hammer. They told him this by signs; and we have only one more instance of the Admiral's facility in interpreting signs in favour of his own beliefs. It is only a few days later that in the same Journal he says, "The people of these lands do not understand me, nor do I nor any other person I have with me understand them; and these Indians I am taking with me, many times understand things contrary to what they are." It was a fault at any rate not exclusively possessed by the Indians, who were doubtless made the subject of many philological experiments on the part of the interpreter; all that they seemed to have learned at this time were certain religious gestures, such as making the Sign of the Cross, which they did continually, greatly to the edification of the crew.

In order to keep these six natives in a good temper Columbus kidnapped "seven women, large and small, and three children," in order, he alleged, that the men might conduct themselves better in Spain because of having their "wives" with them; although whether these assorted women were indeed the wives of the kidnapped natives must at the best be a doubtful matter. The three children, fortunately, had their father and mother with them; but that was only because the father, having seen his wife and children kidnapped, came and offered to go with them of his own accord. This taking of the women raises a question which must be in the mind of any one who studies this extraordinary voyage —the question of the treatment of native women by the Spaniards. Columbus is entirely silent on the subject; but taking into account the nature of the Spanish rabble that formed his company, and his own views as to the right which he had to possess the persons and goods of the native inhabitants, I am afraid that there can be very little doubt that in this matter there is a good reason for his silence. So far as Columbus himself was concerned, it is probable that he was innocent enough; he was not a sensualist by nature, and he was far too much interested and absorbed in the principal objects of his expedition, and had too great a sense of his own personal dignity, to have indulged in excesses that would, thus sanctioned by him, have produced a very disastrous effect on the somewhat rickety discipline of his crew. He was too wise a master, however, to forbid anything that it was

not in his power to prevent; and it is probable that he shut his eyes to much that, if he did not tolerate it, he at any rate regarded as a matter of no very great importance. His crew had by this time learned to know their commander well enough not to commit under his eyes offences for which he would have been sure to punish them.

For two days they ran along the coast with a fair wind; but on the 14th a head wind and heavy sea drove them into the shelter of a deep harbour called by Columbus Puerto del Principe, which is the modern Tanamo. The number of islands off this part of the coast of Cuba confirmed Columbus in his profound geographical error; he took them to be "those innumerable islands which in the maps of the world are placed at the end of the east." He erected a great wooden cross on an eminence here, as he always did when he took possession of a new place, and made some boat excursions among the islands in the harbour. On the 17th of November two of the six youths whom he had taken on board the week before swam ashore and escaped. When he started again on his voyage he was greatly inconvenienced by the wind, which veered about between the north and south of east, and was generally a foul wind for him. There is some difference of opinion as to what point of the wind the ships of Columbus's time would sail on; but there is no doubt that they were

extremely unhandy in anything approaching a head wind, and that they were practically no good at all at beating to windward. The shape of their hulls, the ungainly erections ahead and astern, and their comparatively light hold on the water, would cause them to drift to leeward faster than they could work to windward. In this head wind, therefore, Columbus found that he was making very little headway, although he stood out for long distances to the northward. On Wednesday, November 21st, occurred a most disagreeable incident, which might easily have resulted in the Admiral's never reaching Spain alive. Some time in the afternoon he noticed the *Pinta* standing away ahead of him in a direction which was not the course which he was steering; and he signalled her to close up with him. No answer, however, was made to his signal, which he repeated, but to which he failed to attract any response. He was standing south at the time, the wind being well in the north-east; and Martin Alonso Pinzon, whose caravel pointed into the wind much better than the unhandy *Santa Maria,* was standing to the east. When evening fell he was still in sight, at a distance of sixteen miles. Columbus was really concerned, and fired lombards and flew more signals of invitation; but there was no reply. In the evening he shortened sail and burned a torch all night, "because it appeared that Martin Alonso was returning to me; and the night was very clear, and there was a nice little breeze by which to come to me if he wished." But he did not wish, and he did not come.

Martin Alonso has in fact shown himself at last in his true colours. He has got the fastest ship, he has got a picked company of his own men from Palos; he has got an Indian on board, moreover, who has guaranteed to take him straight to where the gold is; and he has a very agreeable plan of going and getting it, and returning to Spain with the first news and the first wealth. It is open mutiny, and as such cannot but be a matter of serious regret and trouble to the Admiral, who sits writing up his Journal by the swinging lamp in his little cabin. To that friend and confidant he pours out his troubles and his long list of grievances against Martin Alonso; adding, "*He has done and said many other things to me.*" Up on deck the torch is burning to light the wanderer back again, if only he will come; and there is "a nice little breeze" by which to come if he wishes; but Martin Alonso has wishes quite other than that.

The *Pinta* was out of sight the next morning, and the little *Niña* was all that the Admiral had to rely upon for convoy. They were now near the east end of the north coast of Cuba, and they stood in to a harbour which the Admiral called Santa Catalina, and which is now called Cayo de Moa. As the importance of the *Niña* to the expedition had been greatly increased by the defection of the *Pinta*, Columbus went on board and examined her. He found that some of her spars were in danger of giving way; and as there was a forest of pine-

trees rising from the shore he was able to procure a new mizzen mast and latine yard in case it should be necessary to replace those of the *Niña*. The next morning he weighed anchor at sunrise and continued east along the coast. He had now arrived at the extreme end of Cuba, and was puzzled as to what course he should take. Believing Cuba, as he did, to be the mainland of Cathay, he would have liked to follow the coast in its trend to the south-west, in the hope of coming upon the rich city of Quinsay; but on the other hand there was looming to the south-west some land which the natives with him assured him was Bohio, the place where all the gold was. He therefore held on his course; but when the Indians found that he was really going to these islands they became very much alarmed, and made signs that the people would eat them if they went there; and, in order further to dissuade the Admiral, they added that the people there had only one eye, and the faces of dogs. As it did not suit Columbus to believe them he said that they were lying, and that he "felt" that the island must belong to the domain of the Great Khan. He therefore continued his course, seeing many beautiful and enchanting bays opening before him, and longing to go into them, but heroically stifling his curiosity, "because he was detained more than he desired by the pleasure and delight he felt in seeing and gazing on the beauty and freshness of those countries wherever he entered, and because he did not wish to be delayed in prosecuting what he was engaged upon; and for these

reasons he remained that night beating about and standing off and on until day." He could not trust himself, that is to say, to anchor in these beautiful harbours, for he knew he would be tempted to go ashore and waste valuable time exploring the woods; and so he remained instead, beating about in the open sea.

As it was, what with contrary winds and his own indecision as to which course he should pursue, it was December the 6th before he came up with the beautiful island of Hayti, and having sent the *Niña* in front to explore for a harbour, entered the Mole Saint Nicholas, which he called Puerto Maria. Towards the east he saw an island shaped like a turtle, and this island he named Tortuga; and the harbour, which he entered that evening on the hour of Vespers, he called Saint Nicholas, as it was the feast of that saint. Once more his description flounders among superlatives: he thought Cuba was perfect; but he finds the new island more perfect still. The climate is like May in Cordova; the tracts of arable land and fertile valleys and high mountains are like those in Castile; he finds mullet like those of Castile; soles and other fish like those in Castile; nightingales and other small birds like those in Castile; myrtle and other trees and grasses like those in Castile! In short, this new land is so like Spain, only more wonderful and beautiful, that he christens it *Española*.

They stayed two days in the harbour of Saint Nicholas, and then began to coast eastwards along the

shores of Española. Their best progress was made at dawn and sunset, when the land breeze blew off the island; and during the day they encountered a good deal of colder weather and easterly winds, which made their progress slow. Every day they put in at one or other of the natural harbours in which that beautiful coast abounds; every day they saw natives on the shores who generally fled at their approach, but were often prevailed upon to return and to converse with the natives on board the Admiral's ship, and to receive presents and bring parrots and bits of gold in exchange. On one day a party of men foraging ashore saw a beautiful young girl, who fled at their approach; and they chased her a long way through the woods, finally capturing her and bringing her on board. Columbus "caused her to be clothed"—doubtless a diverting occupation for Rodrigo, Juan, Garcia, Pedro, William, and the rest of them, although for the poor, shy, trembling captive not diverting at all—and sent her ashore again loaded with beads and brass rings—to act as a decoy. Having sown this good seed the Admiral waited for a night, and then sent a party of men ashore, "well prepared with arms and adapted for such an affair," to have some conversation with the people. The innocent harvest was duly reaped; the natives met the Spaniards with gifts of food and drink, and understanding that the Admiral would like to have a parrot, they sent as many parrots as were wanted. The husband of the girl who had been captured and clothed came back with her to the shore with a large

body of natives, in order to thank the Admiral for his kindness and clemency; and their confidence was not misplaced, as the Admiral did not at that moment wish to do any more kidnapping.

The Spaniards were more and more amazed and impressed with the beauty and fertility of these islands. The lands were more lovely than the finest land in Castile; the rivers were large and wide, the trees green and full of fruit, the grasses knee-deep and starred with flowers; the birds sang sweetly all night; there were mastic trees and aloes and plantations of cotton. There was fishing in plenty; and if there were not any gold mines immediately at hand, they were sure to be round the next headland or, at the farthest, in the next island. The people, too, charmed and delighted the Admiral, who saw in them a future glorious army of souls converted to the Christian religion. They were taller and handsomer than the inhabitants of the other islands, and the women much fairer; indeed, if they had not been so much exposed to the sun, and if they could only be clothed in the decent garments of civilisation, the Admiral thought that their skins would be as white as those of the women of Spain—which was only another argument for bringing them within the fold of the Holy Catholic Church. The men were powerful and apparently harmless; they showed no truculent or suspicious spirit; they had no knowledge of arms; a thousand of them would not face three Christians; and "so they are suitable to be governed and made to work and sow and do every-

thing else that shall be necessary, and to build villages and be taught to wear clothing and observe our customs." At present, you see, they are but poor happy heathens, living in a paradise of their own, where the little birds sing all through the warm nights, and the rivers murmur through flowery meadows, and no one has any knowledge of arms or desire of such knowledge, and every one goes naked and unashamed. High time, indeed, that they should be taught to wear clothing and observe our customs.

The local chief came on a visit of state to the ship; and the Admiral paid him due honour, telling him that he came as an envoy from the greatest sovereigns in the world. But this charming king, or *cacique* as they called him, would not believe this; he thought that Columbus was, for reasons of modesty, speaking less than the truth—a new charge to bring against our Christopher! He believed that the Spaniards came from heaven, and that the realms of the sovereigns of Castile were in the heavens and not in this world. He took some refreshment, as his councillors did also, little dreaming, poor wretches, what in after years was to come to them through all this palavering and exchanging of presents. The immediate result of the interview, however, was to make intercourse with the natives much freer and pleasanter even than it had been before; and some of the sailors went fishing with the natives. It was then

that they were shown some cane arrows with hardened points, which the natives said belonged to the people of *Caniba*, who, they alleged, came to the island to capture and eat the natives. The Admiral did not believe it; his sublime habit of rejecting everything that did not fit in with his theory of the moment, and accepting everything that did, made him shake his head when this piece of news was brought to him. He could not get the Great Khan out of his head, and his present theory was that this island, being close to the mainland of Cathay, was visited by the armies of the Great Khan, and that it was his men who had used the arrows and made war upon the natives. It was no good for the natives to show him some of their mutilated bodies, and to tell him that the cannibals ate them piecemeal; he had no use for such information. His mind was like a sieve of which the size of the meshes could be adjusted at will; everything that was not germane to the idea of the moment fell through it, and only confirmative evidence remained; and at the moment he was not believing any stories which did not prove that the Great Khan was, so to speak, just round the corner. If they talked about gold he would listen to them; and so the *cacique* brought him a piece of gold the size of his hand and, breaking it into pieces, gave it to him a bit at a time. This the Admiral took to be sign of great intelligence. They told him there was gold at Tortuga, but he preferred to believe that it came from *Babeque*, which may have been Jamaica and may have been nothing at all.

But his theory was that it existed on Española only in small pieces because that country was so rich that the natives had no need for it; an economic theory which one grows dizzy in pondering. At any rate "the Admiral believed that he was very near the fountain-head, and that Our Lord was about to show him where the gold originates."

On Tuesday, December 18th, the ships were all dressed in honour of a religious anniversary, and the *cacique*, hearing the firing of the lombards with which the festival was greeted, came down to the shore to see what was the matter. As Columbus was sitting at dinner on deck beneath the poop the *cacique* arrived with all his people; and the account of his visit is preserved in Columbus's own words.

"As he entered the ship he found that I was eating at the table below the stern forecastle, and he came quickly to seat himself beside me, and would not allow me to go to meet him or get up from the table, but only that I should eat. I thought that he would like to eat some of our viands: and I then ordered that things should be brought him to eat. And when he entered under the forecastle, he signed with his hand that all his people should remain without, and they did so with the greatest haste and respect in the world, and all seated themselves on the deck, except two men of mature age whom I took to be his counsellors and governors, and who came and seated themselves at his feet: and of the viands which I placed before him he took of each one as much as may be taken for a salutation, and then he sent the rest to his people and they all ate some of it, and he did the same with the drink, which he only touched to his

mouth, and then gave it to the others in the same way, and it was all done in wonderful state and with very few words, and whatever he said, according to what I was able to understand, was very formal and prudent, and those two looked in his face and spoke for him and with him, and with great respect.

"After eating, a page brought a belt which is like those of Castile in shape, but of a different make, which he took and gave me, and also two wrought pieces of gold, which were very thin, as I believe they obtain very little of it here, although I consider they are very near the place where it has its home, and that there is a great deal of it. I saw that a drapery that I had upon my bed pleased him. I gave it to him, and some very good amber beads which I wore around my neck and some red shoes and a flask of orange-flower water, with which he was so pleased it was wonderful; and he and his governor and counsellors were very sorry that they did not understand me, nor I them. Nevertheless I understood that he told me that if anything from here would satisfy me that all the island was at my command. I sent for some beads of mine, where as a sign I have a 'excelente' of gold upon which the images of your Highnesses are engraved, and showed it to him, and again told him the same as yesterday, that your Highnesses command and rule over all the best part of the world, and that there are no other such great Princes: and I showed him the royal banners and the others with the cross, which he held in great estimation: and he said to his counsellors that your Highnesses must be great Lords, since you had sent me here from so far without fear: and many other things happened which I did not understand, except that I very well saw he considered everything as very wonderful."

Later in the day Columbus got into talk with an old man who told him that there was a great quantity of

gold to be found on some island about a hundred leagues away; that there was one island that was all gold; and that in the others there was such a quantity that the natives gathered it and sifted it with sieves and made it into bars. The old man pointed out vaguely the direction in which this wonderful country lay; and if he had not been one of the principal persons belonging to the King Columbus would have detained him and taken him with him; but he decided that he had paid the *cacique* too much respect to make it right that he should kidnap one of his retinue. He determined, however, to go and look for the gold. Before he left he had a great cross erected in the middle of the Indian village; and as he made sail out of the harbour that evening he could see the Indians kneeling round the cross and adoring it. He sailed eastward, anchoring for a day in the Bay of Acul, which he called *Cabo de Caribata*, receiving something like an ovation from the natives, and making them presents and behaving very graciously and kindly to them.

It was at this time that Columbus made the acquaintance of a man whose character shines like a jewel amid the dismal scenes that afterwards accompanied the first bursting of the wave of civilisation on these happy shores. This was the king of that part of the island, a young man named Guacanagari. This king sent out a large canoe full of people to the Admiral's ship, with a request that Columbus would land in his country, and a promise that the chief would give him whatever he had. There

must have been an Intelligence Department in the island, for the chief seemed to know what would be most likely to attract the Admiral; and with his messengers he sent out a belt with a large golden mask attached to it. Unfortunately the natives on board the Admiral's ship could not understand Guacanagari's messengers, and nearly the whole of the day was passed in talking before the sense of their message was finally made out by means of signs. In the evening some Spaniards were sent ashore to see if they could not get some gold; but Columbus, who had evidently had some recent experience of their avariciousness, and who was anxious to keep on good terms with the chiefs of the island, sent his secretary with them to see that they did nothing unjust or unreasonable. He was scrupulous to see that the natives got their bits of glass and beads in exchange for the gold; and it is due to him to remember that now, as always, he was rigid in regulating his conduct with other men in accordance with his ideas of justice and honour, however elastic those ideas may seem to have been. The ruffianly crew had in their minds only the immediate possession of what they could get from the Indians; the Admiral had in his mind the whole possession of the islands and the bodies and souls of its inhabitants. If you take a piece of gold without giving a glass bead in exchange for it, it is called stealing; if you take a country and its inhabitants, and steal their peace from them, and give them blood and servitude in exchange for it, it is called colonisation and Empire-building.

Every one understands the distinction; but so few people see the difference that Columbus of all men may be excused for his unconsciousness of it.

Indeed Columbus was seeing yellow at this point in his career. The word "gold" is scattered throughout every page of his Journal; he can understand nothing that the natives say to him except that there is a great quantity of gold somewhere about. He is surrounded by natives pressing presents upon him, protesting their homage, and assuring him (so he thinks) that there are any amount of gold mines; and no wonder that the yellow light blinds his eyes and confounds his senses, and that sometimes, even when the sun has gone down and the natives have retired to their villages and he sits alone in the seclusion of his cabin, the glittering motes still dance before his eyes and he becomes mad, maudlin, ecstatic. . . . The light flickers in the lamp as the ship swings a little on the quiet tide and a night breeze steals through the cabin door; the sound of voices ashore sounds dimly across the water; the brain of the Admiral, overfilled with wonders and promises and hopes, sends its message to the trembling hand that holds the pen, and the incoherent words stream out on the ink. "*May our Lord in His mercy direct me until I find this gold, I say this Mine, because I have many people here who say that they know it.*"

On Christmas Eve a serious misfortune befell Columbus. What with looking for gold, and trying to understand

the people who talked about it, and looking after his ships, and writing up his Journal, he had had practically no sleep for two days and a night; and at eleven o'clock on the 24th of December, the night being fine and his ship sailing along the coast with a light land breeze, he decided to lie down to get some sleep. There were no difficulties in navigation to be feared, because the ship's boats had been rowed the day before a distance of about ten miles ahead on the course which they were then steering and had seen that there was open water all the way. The wind fell calm; and the man at the helm, having nothing to do, and feeling sleepy, called a ship's boy to him, gave him the helm, and went off himself to lie down. This of course was against all rules; but as the Admiral was in his cabin and there was no one to tell them otherwise the watch on deck thought it a very good opportunity to rest. Suddenly the boy felt the rudder catch upon something, saw the ship swinging, and immediately afterwards heard the sound of tide ripples. He cried out; and in a moment Columbus, who was sleeping the light sleep of an anxious shipmaster, came tumbling up to see what was the matter. The current, which flows in that place at a speed of about two knots, had carried the ship on to a sand bank, but she touched so quietly that it was hardly felt. Close on the heels of Columbus came the master of the ship and the delinquent watch; and the Admiral immediately ordered them to launch the ship's boat and lay out an anchor astern so that they could warp her off. The wretches lowered the

boat, but instead of getting the anchor on board rowed off in the direction of the *Niña*, which was lying a mile and a half to windward. As soon as Columbus saw what they were doing he ran to the side and, seeing that the tide was failing and that the ship had swung round across the bank, ordered the remainder of the crew to cut away the mainmast and throw the deck hamper overboard, in order to lighten the ship. This took some time; the tide was falling, and the ship beginning to heel over on her beam; and by the time it was done the Admiral saw that it would be of no use, for the ship's seams had opened and she was filling.

At this point the miserable crew in the ship's boat came back, the loyal people on the *Niña* having refused to receive them and sent them back to the assistance of the Admiral. But it was now too late to do anything to save the ship; and as he did not know but that she might break up, Columbus decided to tranship the people to the *Niña*, who had by this time sent her own boat. The whole company boarded the *Niña*, on which the Admiral beat about miserably till morning in the vicinity of his doomed ship. Then he sent Diego de Arana, the brother of Beatriz and a trusty friend, ashore in a boat to beg the help of the King; and Guacanagari immediately sent his people with large canoes to unload the wrecked ship, which was done with great efficiency and despatch, and the whole of her cargo and fittings stored on shore under a guard. And so farewell to the *Santa Maria*, whose bones were thenceforward to bleach upon

the shores of Hayti, or incongruously adorn the dwellings of the natives. She may have been "a bad sailer and unfit for discovery"; but no seaman looks without emotion upon the wreck of a ship whose stem has cut the waters of home, which has carried him safely over thousands of uncharted miles, and which has for so long been his shelter and sanctuary.

At sunrise the kind-hearted *cacique* came down to the *Niña*, where Columbus had taken up his quarters, and with tears in his eyes begged the Admiral not to grieve at his losses, for that he, the *cacique*, would give him everything that he possessed; that he had already given two large houses to the Spaniards from the *Santa Maria* who had been obliged to encamp on shore, and that he would provide more accommodation and help if necessary. In fact, the day which had been ushered in so disastrously turned into a very happy one; and before it was over Columbus had decided that, as he could not take the whole of his company home on the *Niña*, he would establish a settlement on shore so that the men who were left behind could collect gold and store it until more ships could be sent from Spain. The natives came buzzing round anxious to barter whatever they had for hawks' bells, which apparently were the most popular of the toys that had been brought for bartering; "they shouted and showed the pieces of gold, saying *chuq, chuq*, for hawks' bells, as they are in a likely state

to become crazy for them." The *cacique* was delighted to see that the Admiral was pleased with the gold that was brought to him, and he cheered him up by telling him that there was any amount in *Cibao*, which Columbus of course took for Cipango. The *cacique* entertained Columbus to a repast on shore, at which the monarch wore a shirt and a pair of gloves that Columbus had given him; "and he rejoiced more over the gloves than anything that had been given him." Columbus was pleased with his clean and leisurely method of eating, and with his dainty rubbing of his hands with herbs after he had eaten. After the repast Columbus gave a little demonstration of bow-and-arrow shooting and the firing of lombards and muskets, all of which astonished and impressed the natives.

The afternoon was spent in deciding on a site for the fortress which was to be constructed; and Columbus had no difficulty in finding volunteers among the crews to remain in the settlement. He promised to leave with them provisions of bread and wine for a year, a ship's boat, seeds for sowing crops, and a carpenter, a caulker, a gunner, and a cooper. Before the day was out he was already figuring up the profit that would arise out of his misfortune of the day before; and he decided that it was the act of God which had cast his ship away in order that this settlement should be founded. He hoped that the settlers would have a ton of gold ready for him when he came back from Castile, so that, as he had said in the glittering camp of Santa Fé, where perhaps no one

paid very much heed to him, there might be such a profit as would provide for the conquest of Jerusalem and the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. After all, if he was greedy for gold, he had a pious purpose for its employment.

The last days of the year were very busy ones for the members of the expedition. Assisted by the natives they were building the fort which, in memory of the day on which it was founded, Columbus called *La Villa de la Navidad.* The Admiral spent much time with King Guacanagari, who "loved him so much that it was wonderful," and wished to cover him all over with gold before he went away, and begged him not to go before it was done. On December 27th there was some good news; a caravel had been seen entering a harbour a little further along the coast; and as this could only mean that the *Pinta* had returned, Columbus borrowed a canoe from the king, and despatched a sailor in it to carry news of his whereabouts to the *Pinta.* While it was away Guacanagari collected all the other kings and chiefs who were subject to him, and held a kind of *durbar.* They all wore their crowns; and Guacanagari took off his crown and placed it on Columbus's head; and the Admiral, not to be outdone, took from his own neck "a collar of good bloodstones and very beautiful beads of fine colours, which appeared very good in all parts, and placed it upon the King; and he took off

a cloak of fine scarlet cloth which he had put on that day, and clothed the King with it; and he sent for some coloured buskins which he made him put on, and placed upon his finger a large silver ring"—all of which gives us a picturesque glimpse into the contents of the Admiral's wardrobe, and a very agreeable picture of King Guacanagari, whom we must now figure as clothed, in addition to his shirt and gloves, in a pair of coloured buskins, a collar of bloodstones, a scarlet cloak and a silver ring.

But the time was running short; the Admiral, hampered as he was by the possession of only one small ship, had now but one idea, which was to get back to Castile as quickly as possible, report the result of his discoveries, and come back again with a larger and more efficient equipment. Before he departed he had an affectionate leave-taking with King Guacanagari; he gave him another shirt, and also provided a demonstration of the effect of lombards by having one loaded, and firing at the old *Santa Maria* where she lay hove down on the sandbank. The shot went clean through her hull and fell into the sea beyond, and produced what might be called a very strong moral effect, although an unnecessary one, on the natives. He then set about the very delicate business of organising the settlement. In all, forty-two men were to remain behind, with Diego de Arana in the responsible position of chief lieutenant, assisted by Pedro Gutierrez and Rodrigo de Escovedo, the nephew of Friar Juan Perez of La Rabida. To these

three he delegated all his powers and authority as Admiral and Viceroy; and then, having collected the colonists, gave them a solemn address. First, he reminded them of the goodness of God to them, and advised them to remain worthy of it by obeying the Divine command in all their actions. Second, he ordered them, as a representative of the Sovereigns of Spain, to obey the captain whom he had appointed for them as they would have obeyed himself. Third, he urged them to show respect and reverence towards King Guacanagari and his chiefs, and to the inferior chiefs, and to avoid annoying them or tormenting them, since they were to remain in a land that was as yet under native dominion; to "strive and watch by their soft and honest speech to gain their good-will and keep their friendship and love, so that he should find them as friendly and favourable and more so when he returned." Fourth, he commanded them "and begged them earnestly" to do no injury and use no force against any natives; to take nothing from them against their will; and especially to be on their guard to avoid injury or violence to the women, "by which they would cause scandal and set a bad example to the Indians and show the infamy of the Christians." Fifth, he charged them not to scatter themselves or leave the place where they then were, but to remain together until he returned. Sixth, he "animated" them to suffer their solitude and exile cheerfully and bravely, since they had willingly chosen it. The seventh order was, that they should get help from the King to send boat expeditions

in search of the gold mines; and lastly, he promised that he would petition the Sovereigns to honour them with special favours and rewards. To this very manly, wise and humane address the people listened with some emotion, assuring Columbus that they placed their hopes in him, "begging him earnestly to remember them always, and that as quickly as he could he should give them the great joy which they anticipated from his coming again."

All of which things being done, the ships loaded and provisioned, and the Admiral's final directions given, he makes his farewells and weighs anchor at sunrise on Friday, January 4, 1493. Among the little crowd on the shore who watch the *Niña* growing smaller in the distance are our old friends Allard and William, tired of the crazy confinement of a ship and anxious for shore adventures. They are to have their fill of them, as it happens; adventures that are to bring to the settlers a sudden cloud of blood and darkness, and for the islanders a brief return to their ancient peace. But death waits for Allard and William in the sunshine and silence of Española.

CHAPTER III

THE VOYAGE HOME

COLUMBUS did not stand out to sea on his homeward course immediately, but still coasted along the shores of the island as though he were loth to leave it, and as though he might still at some bend of a bay or beyond some verdant headland come upon the mines and jewels that he longed for. The mountain that he passed soon after starting he called Monte Christi, which name it bears to this day; and he saw many other mountains and capes and bays, to all of which he gave names. And it was a fortunate chance which led him thus to stand along the coast of the island; for on January 6th the sailor who was at the masthead, looking into the clear water for shoals and rocks, reported that he saw the caravel *Pinta* right ahead. When she came up with him, as they were in very shallow water not suitable for anchorage, Columbus returned to the bay of Monte Christi to anchor there. Presently Martin Alonso Pinzon came on board to report himself—a somewhat crestfallen Martin, we may be sure, for he had failed to find the gold the hope of which had led him to break his honour as a seaman. But the Martin Alonsos of this world, however sorry their

position may be, will always find some kind of justification for it. It must have been a trying moment for Martin Alonso as his boat from the *Pinta* drew near the *Niña*, and he saw the stalwart commanding figure of the white-haired Admiral walking the poop. He knew very well that according to the law and custom of the sea Columbus would have been well within his right in shooting him or hanging him on the spot; but Martin puts on a bold face as, with a cold dread at his heart and (as likely as not) an ingratiating smile upon his face he comes up over the side. Perhaps, being in some ways a cleverer man than Christopher, he knew the Admiral's weak points; knew that he was kind-hearted, and would remember those days of preparation at Palos when Martin Alonso had been his principal stay and help. Martin's story was that he had been separated from the Admiral against his will; that the crew insisted upon it, and that in any case they had only meant to go and find some gold and bring it back to the Admiral. Columbus did not believe him for a moment, but either his wisdom or his weakness prevented him from saying so. He reproached Martin Alonso for acting with pride and covetousness "that night when he went away and left him"; and Columbus could not think "from whence had come the haughty actions and dishonesty Martin had shown towards him on that voyage." Martin had done a good trade and had got a certain amount of gold; and no doubt he knew well in what direction to turn the conversation when it was becoming unpleasant to

himself. He told Columbus of an island to the south of Juana[1] called Yamaye,[2] where pieces of gold were taken from the mines as large as kernels of wheat, and of another island towards the east which was inhabited only by women.

The unpleasantness was passed over as soon as possible, although the Admiral felt that the sooner he got home the better, since he was practically at the mercy of the Pinzon brothers and their following from Palos. He therefore had the *Pinta* beached and recaulked and took in wood and water, and continued his voyage on Tuesday, January 8th. He says that "this night in the name of our Lord he will start on his journey without delaying himself further for any matter, since he had found what he had sought, and he did not wish to have more trouble with that Martin Alonso until their Highnesses learned the news of the voyage and what he has done." After that it will be another matter, and his turn will come; for then, he says, "I will not suffer the bad deeds of persons without virtue, who, with little respect, presume to carry out their own wills in opposition to those who did them honour." Indeed, for several days, the name of "that Martin Alonso" takes the place of gold in Columbus's Journal. There were all kinds of gossip about the ill deeds of Martin Alonso, who had taken four Indian men and two young girls by force; the Admiral releasing them immediately and sending them back to their homes. Martin Alonso, moreover, had

[1] Cuba. [2] Jamaica.

made a rule that half the gold that was found was to be kept by himself; and he tried to get all the people of his ship to swear that he had been trading for only six days, but "his wickedness was so public that he could not hide it." It was a good thing that Columbus had his Journal to talk to, for he worked off a deal of bitterness in it. On Sunday, January 13th, when he had sent a boat ashore to collect some "*ajes*" or potatoes, a party of natives with their faces painted and with the plumes of parrots in their hair came and attacked the party from the boat; but on getting a slash or two with a cutlass they took to flight and escaped from the anger of the Spaniards. Columbus thought that they were cannibals or *caribs*, and would like to have taken some of them, but they did not come back, although afterwards he collected four youths who came out to the caravel with cotton and arrows.

Columbus was very curious about the island of *Matinino*,[1] which was the one said to be inhabited only by women, and he wished very much to go there; but the caravels were leaking badly, the crews were complaining, and he was reluctantly compelled to shape his course for Spain. He sailed to the north-east, being anxious apparently to get into the region of westerly winds which he correctly guessed would be found to the north of the course he had sailed on his outward voyage. By the 17th of January he was in the vicinity of the Sargasso Sea again, which this time had no terrors for him.

[1] Martinique.

From his Journal the word "gold" suddenly disappears; the Viceroy and Governor-General steps off the stage; and in his place appears the sea captain, watching the frigate birds and pelicans, noting the golden gulf-weed in the sea, and smelling the breezes that are once more as sweet as the breezes of Seville in May. He had a good deal of trouble with his dead-reckoning at this time, owing to the changing winds and currents; but he made always from fifty to seventy miles a day in a direction between north-by-east and north-north-east. The *Pinta* was not sailing well, and he often had to wait for her to come up with him; and he reflected in his Journal that if Martin Alonso Pinzon had taken as much pains to provide himself with a good mast in the Indies as he had to separate himself from the Admiral, the *Pinta* would have sailed better.

And so he went on for several days, with the wind veering always south and south-west, and pointing pretty steadily to the north-east. On February 4th he changed his course, and went as near due east as he could. They now began to find themselves in considerable doubt as to their position. The Admiral said he was seventy-five leagues to the south of Flores; Vincenti Pinzon and the pilots thought that they had passed the Azores and were in the neighbourhood of Madeira. In other words, there was a difference of 600 miles between their estimates, and the Admiral remarks that "the grace of God permitting, as soon as land is seen, it will be known who has calculated the surest."

A great quantity of birds that began to fly about the ship made him think that they were near land, but they turned out to be the harbingers of a storm. On Tuesday, February 12th, the sea and wind began to rise, and it continued to blow harder throughout that night and the next day. The wind being aft he went under bare poles most of the night, and when day came hoisted a little sail; but the sea was terrible, and if he had not been so sure of the staunch little *Niña* he would have felt himself in danger of being lost. The next day the sea, instead of going down, increased in roughness; there was a heavy cross sea which kept breaking right over the ship, and it became necessary to make a little sail in order to run before the wind, and to prevent the vessel falling back into the trough of the seas. All through Thursday he ran thus under the half hoisted staysail, and he could see the *Pinta* running also before the wind, although since she presented more surface, and was able to carry a little more sail than the *Niña*, she was soon lost to sight. The Admiral showed lights through the night, and this time there was no lack of response from Martin Alonso; and for some part of that dark and stormy night these two humanly freighted scraps of wood and cordage staggered through the gale showing lights to each other; until at last the light from the *Pinta* disappeared. When morning came she was no longer to be seen; and the wind and the sea had if anything increased. The *Niña* was now in the greatest danger. Any one wave of the heavy cross sea, if it had broken

fairly across her, would have sunk her; and she went swinging and staggering down into the great valleys and up into the hills, the steersman's heart in his mouth, and the whole crew in an extremity of fear. Columbus, who generally relied upon his seamanship, here invoked external aid, and began to offer bargains to the Almighty. He ordered that lots should be cast, and that he upon whom the lot fell should make a vow to go on pilgrimage to Santa Maria de Guadaloupe carrying a white candle of five pounds weight. Some dried peas were brought, one for every member of the crew, and on one of them a cross was marked with a knife; the peas were well shaken and were put into a cap. The first to draw was the Admiral; he drew the marked pea, and he made the vow. Lots were again drawn, this time for a greater pilgrimage to Santa Maria de Loretto in Ancona; and the lot fell on a seaman named Pedro de Villa, the expenses of whose pilgrimage Columbus promised to pay. Again lots were drawn for a pilgrimage to the shrine of Santa Clara of Moguer, the pilgrim to watch and pray for one night there; and again the lot fell on Columbus. In addition to these, every one, since they took themselves for lost, made some special and private vow or bargain with God; and finally they all made a vow together that at the first land they reached they would go in procession in their shirts to pray at an altar of Our Lady.

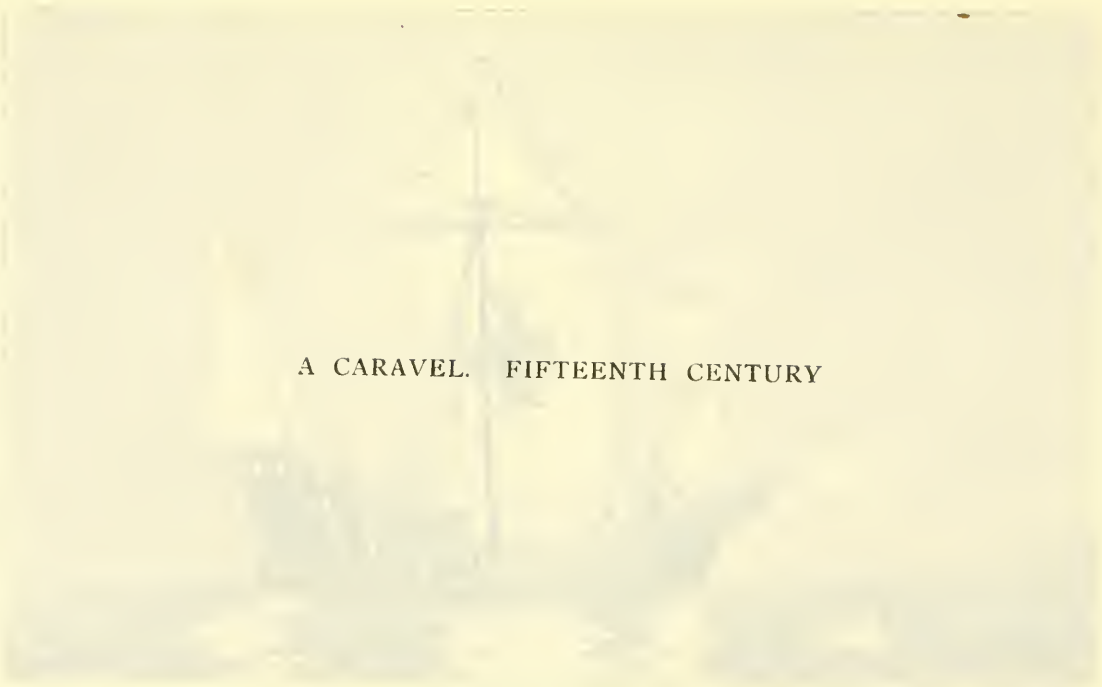
The scene thus conjured up is one peculiar to the time and condition of these people, and is eloquent and

pathetic enough: the little ship staggering and bounding along before the wind, and the frightened crew, who had gone through so many other dangers, huddled together under the forecastle, drawing peas out of a cap, crossing themselves, making vows upon their knees, and seeking to hire the protection of the Virgin by their offers of candles and pilgrimages. Poor Christopher, standing in his drenched oilskins and clinging to a piece of rigging, had his own searching of heart and examining of conscience. He was aware of the feverish anxiety and impatience that he felt, now that he had been successful in discovering a New World, to bring home the news and fruits of it; his desire to prove true what he had promised was so great that, in his own graphic phrase, "it seemed to him that every gnat could disturb and impede it"; and he attributed this anxiety to his lack of faith in God. He comforted himself, like Robinson Crusoe in a similar extremity, by considering on the other hand what favours God had shown him, and by remembering that it was to the glory of God that the fruits of his discovery were to be dedicated. But in the meantime here he was in a ship insufficiently ballasted (for she was now practically empty of provisions, and they had found it necessary to fill the wine and water casks with salt water in order to trim her) and flying before a tempest such as he had never experienced in his life. As a last resource, and in order to give his wonderful news a chance of reaching Spain in case the ship were lost, he went into his cabin and somehow or other managed to write on a piece of

parchment a brief account of his discoveries, begging any one who might find it to carry it to the Spanish Sovereigns. He tied up the parchment in a waxed cloth, and put it into a large barrel without any one seeing him, and then ordered the barrel to be thrown into the sea, which the crew took to be some pious act of sacrifice or devotion. Then he went back on deck and watched the last of the daylight going and the green seas swelling and thundering about his little ship, and thought anxiously of his two little boys at school in Cordova, and wondered what would become of them if he were lost.

The next morning the wind had changed a little, though it was still very high; but he was able to hoist up the bonnet or topsail, and presently the sea began to go down a little. When the sun rose they saw land to the east-north-east. Some of them thought it was Madeira, others the rock of Cintra in Portugal; the pilots said it was the coast of Spain, the Admiral thought it was the Azores; but at any rate it was land of some kind. The sun was shining upon it and upon the tumbling sea; and although the waves were still raging mast-high and the wind still blowing a hard gale, the miserable crew were able to hope that, having lived through the night, they could live through the day also.

They had to beat about to make the land, which was now ahead of them, now on the beam, and now astern; and although they had first sighted it at sunrise on Friday morning it was early on Monday



A CARAVEL. FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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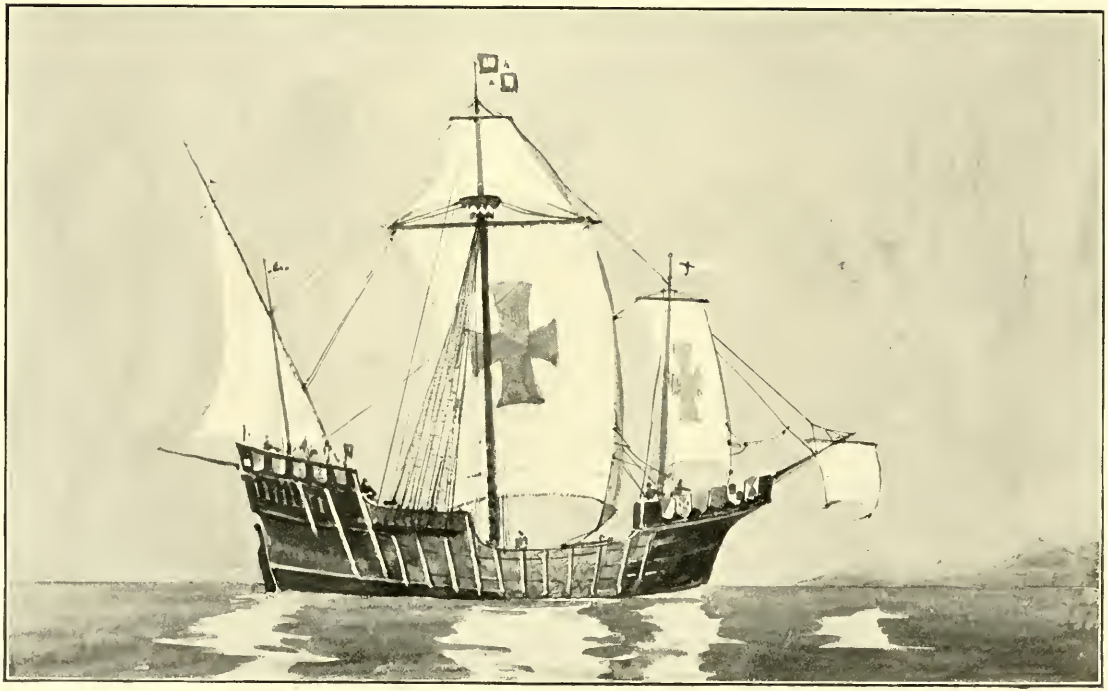

morning, February 18th, before Columbus was able to cast anchor off the northern coast of an island which he discovered to be the island of Santa Maria in the Azores. On this day Columbus found time to write a letter to Luis de Santangel, the royal Treasurer, giving a full account of his voyage and discoveries; which letter he kept and despatched on the 4th of March, after he had arrived in Lisbon. Since it contained a postscript written at the last moment we shall read it at that stage of our narrative. The inhabitants of Santa Maria received the voyagers with astonishment, for they believed that nothing could have lived through the tempest that had been raging for the last fortnight. They were greatly excited by the story of the discoveries; and the Admiral, who had now quite recovered command of himself, was able to pride himself on the truth of his dead-reckoning, which had proved to be so much more accurate than that of the pilots.

On the Tuesday evening three men hailed them from the shore, and when they were brought off to the ship delivered a message from the Portuguese Governor of the island, Juan de Castaneda, to the effect that he knew the Admiral very well, and that he was delighted to hear of his wonderful voyage. The next morning Columbus, remembering the vow that had been made in the storm, sent half the crew ashore in their shirts to a little hermitage, which was on the other side of a point a

short distance away, and asked the Portuguese messenger to send a priest to say Mass for them. While the members of the crew were at their prayers, however, they received a rude surprise. They were suddenly attacked by the islanders, who had come up on horses under the command of the treacherous Governor, and taken prisoners. Columbus waited unsuspectingly for the boat to come back with them, in order that he and the other half of the crew could go and perform their vow.

When the boat did not come back he began to fear that some accident must have happened to it, and getting his anchor up he set sail for the point beyond which the hermitage was situated. No sooner had he rounded the point than he saw a band of horsemen, who dismounted, launched the boat which was drawn up on the beach, and began to row out, evidently with the intention of attacking the Admiral. When they came up to the *Niña* the man in command of them rose and asked Columbus to assure him of personal safety; which assurance was wonderingly given; and the Admiral inquired how it was that none of his own people were in the boat? Columbus suspected treachery and tried to meet it with treachery also, endeavouring with smooth words to get the captain to come on board so that he could seize him as a hostage. But as the Portuguese would not come on board Columbus told them that they were acting very unwisely in affronting his people; that in the land of the Sovereigns of Castile the Portuguese were

treated with great honour and security; that he held letters of recommendation from the Sovereigns addressed to every ruler in the world, and added that he was their Admiral of the Ocean Seas and Viceroy of the Indies, and could show the Portuguese his commission to that effect; and finally, that if his people were not returned to him, he would immediately make sail for Spain with the crew that was left to him and report this insult to the Spanish Sovereigns. To all of which the Portuguese captain replied that he did not know any Sovereigns of Castile; that neither they nor their letters were of any account in that island; that they were not afraid of Columbus; and that they would have him know that he had Portugal to deal with—edging away in the boat at the same time to a convenient distance from the caravel. When he thought he was out of gunshot he shouted to Columbus, ordering him to take his caravel back to the harbour by command of the Governor of the island. Columbus answered by calling his crew to witness that he pledged his word not to descend from or leave his caravel until he had taken a hundred Portuguese to Castile, and had depopulated all their islands. After which explosion of words he returned to the harbour and anchored there, "as the weather and wind were very unfavourable for anything else."

He was, however, in a very bad anchorage, with a rocky bottom which presently fouled his anchors; and on the Wednesday he had to make sail towards the island of

San Miguel in order to try and find a better anchorage. But the wind and sea getting up again very badly he was obliged to beat about all night in a very unpleasant situation, with only three sailors who could be relied upon, and a rabble of gaol-birds and longshoremen who were of little use in a tempest but to draw lots and vow pilgrimages. Finding himself unable to make the island of San Miguel he decided to go back to Santa Maria and make an attempt to recover his boat and his crew and the anchor and cables he had lost there.

In his Journal for this day, and amid all his anxieties, he found time to note down one of his curious visionary cosmographical reflections. This return to a region of storms and heavy seas reminded him of the long months he had spent in the balmy weather and calm waters of his discovery; in which facts he found a confirmation of the theological idea that the Eden, or Paradise, of earth was "at the end of the Orient, because it is a most temperate place. So that these lands which he had now discovered are at the end of the Orient." Reflections such as these, which abound in his writings, ought in themselves to be a sufficient condemnation of those who have endeavoured to prove that Columbus was a man of profound cosmographical learning and of a scientific mind. A man who would believe that he had discovered the Orient because in the place where he had been he had found calm weather, and because the theologians said that the Garden of Eden must be in the Orient since it is a temperate place, would believe anything.

Late on Thursday night, when he anchored again in the harbour of San Lorenzo at Santa Maria, a man hailed them from the rocks, and asked them not to go away. Presently a boat containing five sailors, two priests, and a notary put off from the beach; and they asked for a guarantee of security in order that they might treat with the Admiral. They slept on board that night, and in the morning asked him to show them his authority from the Spanish Sovereigns, which the Admiral did, understanding that they had asked for this formality in order to save their dignity. He showed them his general letter from the King and Queen of Spain, addressed to "Princes and Lords of High Degree"; and being satisfied with this they went ashore and released the Admiral's people, from whom he learned that what had been done had been done by command of the King of Portugal, and that he had issued an order to the Governors of all the Portuguese islands that if Columbus landed there on his way home he was to be taken prisoner.

He sailed again on Sunday, February 24th, encountering heavy winds and seas, which troubled him greatly with fears lest some disaster should happen at the eleventh hour to interfere with his triumph. On Sunday, March 3rd, the wind rose to the force of a hurricane, and, on a sudden gust of violent wind splitting all the sails, the unhappy crew gathered together again and drew more lots and made more vows. This time the

pilgrimage was to be to the shrine of Santa Maria at Huelva, the pilgrim to go as before in his shirt; and the lot fell to the Admiral. The rest of them made a vow to fast on the next Saturday on bread and water; but as they all thought it extremely unlikely that by that time they would be in need of any bodily sustenance the sacrifice could hardly have been a great one. They scudded along under bare poles and in a heavy cross sea all that night; but at dawn on Monday they saw land ahead of them, which Columbus recognised as the rock of Cintra at Lisbon; and at Lisbon sure enough they landed some time during the morning. As soon as they were inside the river the people came flocking down with stories of the gale and of all the wrecks that there had been on the coast. Columbus hurried away from the excited crowds to write a letter to the King of Portugal, asking him for a safe conduct to Spain, and assuring him that he had come from the Indies, and not from any of the forbidden regions of Guinea.

The next day brought a visit from no less a person than Bartholomew Diaz. Columbus had probably met him before in 1486, when Diaz had been a distinguished man and Columbus a man not distinguished; but now things were changed. Diaz ordered Columbus to come on board his small vessel in order to go and report himself to the King's officers; but Columbus replied that he was the Admiral of the Sovereigns of Castile, "that he did not render such account to such persons," and that he declined to leave his ship. Diaz then ordered him to

send the captain of the *Niña;* but Columbus refused to send either the captain or any other person, and otherwise gave himself airs as the Admiral of the Ocean Seas. Diaz then moderated his requests, and merely asked Columbus to show him his letter of authority, which Columbus did; and then Diaz went away and brought back with him the captain of the Portuguese royal yacht, who came in great state on board the shabby little *Niña*, with kettle-drums and trumpets and pipes, and placed himself at the disposal of Columbus. It is a curious moment, this, in which the two great discoverers of their time, Diaz and Columbus, meet for an hour on the deck of a forty-ton caravel; a curious thing to consider that they who had performed such great feats of skill and bravery, one to discover the southernmost point of the old world and the other to voyage across an uncharted ocean to the discovery of an entirely new world, could find nothing better to talk about than their respective ranks and glories; and found no more interesting subject of discussion than the exact amount of state and privilege which should be accorded to each.

During the day or two in which Columbus waited in the port crowds of people came down from Lisbon to see the little *Niña*, which was an object of much admiration and astonishment; to see the Indians also, at whom they greatly marvelled. It was probably at this time that the letter addressed to Luis de Santangel,

containing the first official account of the voyage, was despatched.

✝

"Sir: As I am sure you will be pleased at the great victory which the Lord has given me in my voyage, I write this to inform you that in twenty[1] days I arrived in the Indies with the squadron which their Majesties had placed under my command. There I discovered many islands, inhabited by a numerous population, and took possession of them for their Highnesses, with public ceremony and the royal flag displayed, without molestation.

"The first that I discovered I named San Salvador, in remembrance of that Almighty Power which had so miraculously bestowed them. The Indians call it Guanahani. To the second I assigned the name of Santa Marie de Conception; to the third that of Fernandina; to the fourth that of Isabella; to the fifth Juana; and so on, to every one a new name.

"When I arrived at Juana, I followed the coast to the westward, and found it so extensive that I considered it must be a continent and a province of Cathay. And as I found no towns or villages by the seaside, excepting some small settlements, with the people of which I could not communicate because they all ran away, I continued my course to the westward, thinking I should not fail to find some large town and cities. After having coasted many leagues without finding any signs of them, and seeing that the coast took me to the northward, where

[1] *viente*—a typographical mistake for xxxiii.

I did not wish to go, as the winter was already set in, I considered it best to follow the coast to the south: and the wind being also scant, I determined to lose no more time, and therefore returned to a certain port, from whence I sent two messengers into the country to ascertain whether there was any king there or any large city.

"They travelled for three days, finding an infinite number of small settlements and an innumerable population, but nothing like a city: on which account they returned. I had tolerably well ascertained from some Indians whom I had taken that this land was only an island, so I followed the coast of it to the east 107 leagues, to its termination. And about eighteen leagues from this cape, to the east, there was another island, to which I shortly gave the name of Española. I went to it, and followed the north coast of it, as I had done that of Juana, for 178[1] long leagues due east.

"This island is very fertile, as well, indeed, as all the rest. It possesses numerous harbours, far superior to any I know in Europe, and what is remarkable, plenty of large inlets. The land is high, and contains many lofty ridges and some very high mountains, without comparison of the island of Centrefrey;[2] all of them very handsome and of different forms; all of them accessible and abounding in trees of a thousand kinds, high, and appearing as if they would reach the skies. And I am assured that the latter never lose their fresh foliage, as far as I can understand, for I saw them as fresh and flourishing as those of Spain in the month of

[1] Should be 188. [2] Teneriffe.

May. Some were in blossom, some bearing fruit, and others in other states, according to their nature.

"The nightingale and a thousand kinds of birds enliven the woods with their song, in the month of November, wherever I went. There are seven or eight kinds of palms, of various elegant forms, besides various other trees, fruits, and herbs. The pines of this island are magnificent. It has also extensive plains, honey, and a great variety of birds and fruits. It has many metal mines, and a population innumerable.

"Española is a wonderful island, with mountains, groves, plains, and the country generally beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, for rearing sheep and cattle of all kinds, and ready for towns and cities. The harbours must be seen to be appreciated; rivers are plentiful and large and of excellent water; the greater part of them contain gold. There is a great difference between the trees, fruits, and herbs of this island and those of Juana. In this island[1] there are many spices, and large mines of gold and other metals.

"The people of this island and of all the others which I have discovered or heard of, both men and women, go naked as they were born, although some of the women wear leaves of herbs or a cotton covering made on purpose. They have no iron or steel, nor any weapons; not that they are not a well-disposed people and of fine stature, but they are timid to a degree. They have no other arms excepting spears made of cane, to which they fix at the end a sharp piece of wood, and then dare not use even these. Frequently I had occasion to send two

[1] Española.

or three of my men on shore to some settlement for information, where there would be multitudes of them; and as soon as they saw our people they would run away every soul, the father leaving his child; and this was not because any one had done them harm, for rather at every cape where I had landed and been able to communicate with them I have made them presents of cloth and many other things without receiving anything in return; but because they are so timid. Certainly, where they have confidence and forget their fears, they are so open-hearted and liberal with all they possess that it is scarcely to be believed without seeing it. If anything that they have is asked of them they never deny it; on the contrary, they will offer it. Their generosity is so great that they would give anything, whether it is costly or not, for anything of every kind that is offered them and be contented with it. I was obliged to prevent such worthless things being given them as pieces of broken basins, broken glass, and bits of shoe-latchets, although when they obtained them they esteemed them as if they had been the greatest of treasures. One of the seamen for a latchet received a piece of gold weighing two dollars and a half, and others, for other things of much less value, obtained more. Again, for new silver coin they would give everything they possessed, whether it was worth two or three doubloons or one or two balls of cotton. Even for pieces of broken pipe-tubes they would take them and give anything for them, until, when I thought it wrong, I prevented it. And I made them presents of thousands of things which I had, that I might win their esteem, and also that they might be made good Christians and be disposed to the service of

Your Majesties and the whole Spanish nation, and help us to obtain the things which we require and of which there is abundance in their country.

"And these people appear to have neither religion nor idolatry, except that they believe that good and evil come from the skies; and they firmly believed that our ships and their crews, with myself, came from the skies, and with this persuasion, after having lost their fears, they always received us. And yet this does not proceed from ignorance, for they are very ingenious, and some of them navigate their seas in a wonderful manner and give good account of things, but because they never saw people dressed or ships like ours.

"And as soon as I arrived in the Indies, at the first island at which I touched, I captured some of them, that we might learn from them and obtain intelligence of what there was in those parts. And as soon as we understood each other they were of great service to us; but yet, from frequent conversation which I had with them, they still believe we came from the skies. These were the first to express that idea, and others ran from house to house, and to the neighbouring villages, crying out, "Come and see the people from the skies." And thus all of them, men and women, after satisfying themselves of their safety, came to us without reserve, great and small, bringing us something to eat and drink, and which they gave to us most affectionately.

"They have many canoes in those islands propelled by oars, some of them large and others small, and many of them with eight or ten paddles of a side, not very wide, but all of one trunk, and a boat cannot keep way with them by oars, for they are incredibly fast; and with these they

navigate all the islands, which are innumerable, and obtain their articles of traffic. I have seen some of these canoes with sixty or eighty men in them, and each with a paddle.

"Among the islands I did not find much diversity of formation in the people, nor in their customs, nor their language. They all understand each other, which is remarkable; and I trust Your Highnesses will determine on their being converted to our faith, for which they are very well disposed.

"I have already said that I went 107 leagues along the coast of Juana, from east to west. Thus, according to my track, it is larger than England and Scotland together, for, besides these 107 leagues, there were further west two provinces to which I did not go, one of which is called Cibau, the people of which are born with tails; which provinces must be about fifty or sixty leagues long, according to what I can make out from the Indians I have with me, who know all the islands. The other island (Española) is larger in circuit than the whole of Spain, from the Straits of Gibralter (the Columns) to Fuentarabia in Biscay, as I sailed 138 long leagues in a direct line from west to east. Once known it must be desired, and once seen one desires never to leave it; and which, being taken possession of for their Highnesses, and the people being at present in a condition lower than I can possibly describe, the Sovereigns of Castile may dispose of it in any manner they please in the most convenient places. In this Española, and in the best district, where are gold mines, and, on the other side, from thence to terra firma, as well as from thence to the Great Khan, where everything is on a splendid scale—I have taken possession of a large town, to which I gave the name of

La Navidad, and have built a fort in it, in every respect complete. And I have left sufficient people in it to take care of it, with artillery and provisions for more than a year; also a boat and coxswain with the equipments, in complete friendship with the King of the islands, to that degree that he delighted to call me and look on me as his brother. And should they fall out with these people, neither he nor his subjects know anything of weapons, and go naked, as I have said, and they are the most timorous people in the world. The few people left there are sufficient to conquer the country, and the island would thus remain without danger to them, they keeping order among themselves.

"In all these islands it appeared to me the men are contented with one wife, but to their governor or king they allow twenty. The women seem to work more than the men. I have not been able to discover whether they respect personal property, for it appeared to me things were common to all, especially in the particular of provisions. Hitherto I have not seen in any of these islands any monsters, as there were supposed to be; the people, on the contrary, are generally well formed, nor are they black like those of the Guinea, saving their hair, and they do not reside in places exposed to the sun's rays. It is true that the sun is most powerful there, and it is only twenty-six degrees from the equator. In this last winter those islands which were mountainous were cold, but they were accustomed to it, with good food and plenty of spices and hot nutriment. Thus I have found no monsters nor heard of any, except at an island which is the second in going to the Indies, and which is inhabited by a people who are considered in all the islands

as ferocious, and who devour human flesh. These people have many canoes, which scour all the islands of India, and plunder all they can. They are not worse formed than the others, but they wear the hair long like women, and use bows and arrows of the same kind of cane, pointed with a piece of hard wood instead of iron, of which they have none. They are fierce compared with the other people, who are in general but sad cowards; but I do not consider them in any other way superior to them. These are they who trade in women, who inhabit the first island met with in going from Spain to the Indies, in which there are no men whatever. They have no effeminate exercise, but bows and arrows, as before said, of cane, with which they arm themselves, and use shields of copper, of which they have plenty.

"There is another island, I am told, larger than Española, the natives of which have no hair. In this there is gold without limit, and of this and the others I have Indians with me to witness.

"In conclusion, referring only to what has been effected by this voyage, which was made with so much haste, Your Highnesses may see that I shall find as much gold as desired with the very little assistance afforded to me; there is as much spice and cotton as can be wished for, and also gum, which hitherto has only been found in Greece, in the island of Chios, and they may sell it as they please, and the mastich, as much as may be desired, and slaves, also, who will be idolators. And I believe that I have rhubarb, and cinnamon, and a thousand other things I shall find, which will be discovered by those whom I have left behind, for I did not stop at any cape when the wind enabled me to navigate, except at the

town of Navidad, where I was very safe and well taken care of. And in truth much more I should have done if the ships had served me as might have been expected. This is certain, that the Eternal God our Lord gives all things to those who obey Him, and the victory when it seems impossible, and this, evidently, is an instance of it, for although people have talked of these lands, all was conjecture unless proved by seeing them, for the greater part listened and judged more by hearsay than by anything else.

"Since, then, our Redeemer has given this victory to our illustrious King and Queen and celebrated their reigns by such a great thing, all Christendom should rejoice and make great festivals, and give solemn thanks to the Blessed Trinity, with solemn praises for the exaltation of so much people to our holy faith; and next for the temporal blessings which not only Spain but they will enjoy in becoming Christians, and which last may shortly be accomplished.

"Written in the caravel off Santa Maria, on the eighteenth of February, ninety-three."

The following postscript was added to the letter before it was despatched :—

"After writing the above, being in the Castilian Sea (off the coast of Castile), I experienced so severe a wind from south and south-east that I have been obliged to run to-day into this port of Lisbon, and only by a miracle got safely in, from whence I intended to write to Your Highnesses. In all parts of the Indies I have found the weather like that of May, where I went in ninety-three

days, and returned in seventy-eight, saving these thirteen days of bad weather that I have been detained beating about in this sea. Every seaman here says that never was so severe a winter, nor such loss of ships."

On the Friday a messenger came from the King in the person of Don Martin de Noronha, a relative of Columbus by marriage, and one who had perhaps looked down upon him in the days when he attended the convent chapel at Lisbon, but who was now the bearer of a royal invitation and in the position of a mere envoy. Columbus repaired to Paraiso where the King was, and where he was received with great honour. King John might well have been excused if he had felt some mortification at this glorious and successful termination of a project which had been offered to him and which he had rejected; but he evidently behaved with dignity and a good grace, and did everything that he could to help Columbus. It was extremely unlikely that he had anything to do with the insult offered to Columbus at the Azores, for though he was bitterly disappointed that the glory of this discovery belonged to Spain and not to Portugal, he was too much of a man to show it in this petty and revengeful manner. He offered to convey Columbus by land into Spain; but the Admiral, with a fine dramatic sense, preferred to arrive by sea on board of all that was left of the fleet with which he had sailed. He sailed for Seville on

Wednesday, March 13th, but during the next day, when he was off Cape Saint Vincent, he evidently changed his mind and decided to make for Palos. Sunrise on Friday saw him off the bar of Saltes, with the white walls of La Rabida shining on the promontory among the dark fir-trees. During the hours in which he stood off and on waiting for the tide he was able to recognise again all the old landmarks and the scenes which had been so familiar to him in those busy days of preparation nine months before; and at midday he sailed in with the flood tide and dropped his anchor again in the mud of the river by Palos.

The caravel had been sighted some time before, probably when she was standing off the bar waiting for the tide; she was flying the Admiral's flag and there was no mistaking her identity; and we can imagine the news spreading throughout the town of Palos, and reaching Huelva, and one by one the bells beginning to ring, and the places of business to be closed, and the people to come pouring out into the streets to be ready to greet their friends. Some more impatient than the others would sail out in fishing-boats to get the first news; and I should be surprised to know that a boat did not put off from the little pier beneath La Rabida, to row round the point and out to where the *Niña* was lying-to beyond the Manto Bank. When the flood began to make over the bar and to cover the long sandbank that stretches from the island of Saltes, the *Niña* came gliding in, greeted by every joyful sound and signal that the

inhabitants of the two seaports could make. Every one hurried down to Palos as the caravel rounded the Convent Point. Hernando, Marchena, and good old Juan Perez were all there, we may be sure. Such excitements, such triumphs as the bronzed, white-bearded Admiral steps ashore at last, and is seized by dozens of eager hands! Such excitements as all the wives and inamoratas of the Rodrigos and Juans and Franciscos rush to meet the swarthy voyagers and cover them with embraces; such disappointments also, when it is realised that some two score of the company are still on a sun-baked island infinitely far over the western horizon! Tears of joy and grief, shouts and feastings, firing of guns and flying of flags, processions and receptions—with these the deathless day is filled; and the little *Niña*, her purpose staunchly fulfilled, swings deserted on the turning tide, the ripples of her native Tinto making a familiar music under her bowsprit.

And in the evening, with the last of the flood, another ship comes gliding round the point and up the estuary. The inhabitants of Palos have all left the shore and are absorbed in the business of welcoming the great man; and there is no one left to notice or welcome the *Pinta*. For it is she that, by a strange coincidence, and after many dangers and distresses endured since she had parted company from the *Niña* in the storm, now has made her native port on the very same day as the *Niña*. Our old

friend Martin Alonso Pinzon is on board, all the fight and treachery gone out of him, and anxious only to get home unobserved. For (according to the story) he had made the port of Bayona on the north-west coast of Spain, and had written a letter from there to the Sovereigns announcing his arrival and the discoveries that he had made; and it is said that he had received an unpleasant letter in return, reproaching him for not waiting for his commander and forbidding him to come to Court. This story is possible if his letter reached the Sovereigns after the letter from the Admiral; for it is probable that Columbus may have reported some of Martin's doings to them.

Be that as it may, there are no flags and guns for him as he comes creeping in up the river; his one anxiety is to avoid the Admiral and to get home as quickly and quietly as he can. For he is ill, poor Martin Alonso; whether from a broken heart, as the early historians say, or from pure chagrin and disappointment, or, as is more likely, from some illness contracted on the voyage, it is impossible to say. He has endured his troubles and hardships like all the rest of them; no less skilfully than Columbus has he won through that terrible tempest of February; and his foolish and dishonest conduct has deprived him not only of the rewards that he tried to steal, but of those which would otherwise have been his by right. He creeps quietly ashore and to his home, where at any rate we may hope that there is some welcome for him; takes

to his bed, turns his face to the wall; and dies in a few days. So farewell to Martin Alonso, who has borne us company thus far. He did not fail in the great matters of pluck and endurance and nautical judgment, but only in the small matters of honesty and decent manly conduct. We will not weep for Martin Alonso; we will make our farewells in silence, and leave his death-bed undisturbed by any more accusations or reproaches.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOUR OF TRIUMPH

FROM the moment when Columbus set foot on Spanish soil in the spring of 1493 he was surrounded by a fame and glory which, although they were transient, were of a splendour such as few other men can have ever experienced. He had not merely discovered a country, he had discovered a world. He had not merely made a profitable expedition; he had brought the promise of untold wealth to the kingdom of Spain. He had not merely made himself the master of savage tribes; he had conquered the supernatural, and overcome for ever those powers of darkness that had been thought to brood over the vast Atlantic. He had sailed away in obscurity, he had returned in fame; he had departed under a cloud of scepticism and ridicule, he had come again in power and glory. He had sailed from Palos as a seeker after hidden wealth, hidden knowledge; he returned as teacher, discoverer, benefactor. The whole of Spain rang with his fame, and the echoes of it spread to Portugal, France, England, Germany, and Italy; and it reached the ears of his own family, who had now left the Vico Dritto di Ponticello in Genoa and were living at Savona.

His life ashore in the first weeks following his return was a succession of triumphs and ceremonials. His first care on landing had been to go with the whole of his crew to the church of Saint George, where a *Te Deum* was sung in honour of his return; and afterwards to perform those vows that he had made at sea in the hour of danger. There was a certain amount of business to transact at Palos in connection with the paying of the ships' crews, writing of reports to the Sovereigns, and so forth; and it is likely that he stayed with his friends at the monastery of La Rabida while this was being done. The Court was at Barcelona; and it was probably only a sense of his own great dignity and importance that prevented Christopher from setting off on the long journey immediately. But he who had made so many pilgrimages to Court as a suitor could revel in a position that made it possible for him to hang back, and to be pressed and invited; and so when his business at Palos was finished he sent a messenger with his letters and reports to Barcelona, and himself, with his crew and his Indians and all his trophies, departed for Seville, where he arrived on Palm Sunday.

His entrance into that city was only a foretaste of the glory in which he was to move across the whole of Spain. He was met at the gates of the city by a squadron of cavalry commanded by an envoy sent by Queen Isabella; and a procession was formed of members of the crew carrying parrots, alive and stuffed, fruits, vegetables, and various other products of the New World.

In a prominent place came the Indians, or rather four of them, for one had died on the day they entered Palos and three were too ill to leave that town; but the ones that took part in the procession got all the more attention and admiration. The streets of Seville were crowded; crowded also were the windows, balconies, and roofs. The Admiral was entertained at the house of the Count of Cifuentes, where his little museum of dead and live curiosities was also accommodated, and where certain favoured visitors were admitted to view it. His two sons, Diego and Ferdinand, were sent from Cordova to join him; and perhaps he found time to visit Beatriz, although there is no record of his having been to Cordova or of her having come to Seville.

Meanwhile his letters and messengers to the King and Queen had produced their due effect. The almost incredible had come to pass, and they saw themselves the monarchs not merely of Spain, but of a new Empire that might be as vast as Europe and Africa together. On the 30th of March they despatched a special messenger with a letter to Columbus, whose eyes must have sparkled and heart expanded when he read the superscription: "From the King and Queen to Don Christoval Colon, their Admiral of the Ocean Seas and Viceroy and Governor of the Islands discovered in the Indies." No lack of titles and dignities now! Their Majesties express a profound sense of his ability and dis-

tinction, of the greatness of his services to them, to the Church, and to God Himself. They hope that he will lose no time, but repair to Barcelona immediately, so that they can have the pleasure of hearing from his own lips an account of his wonderful expedition, and of discussing with him the preparations that must immediately be set on foot to fit out a new one. On receiving this letter Christopher immediately drew up a list of what he thought necessary for the new expedition and, collecting all his retinue and his museum of specimens started by road for Barcelona.

Every one in Spain had by this time heard more or less exaggerated accounts of the discoveries, and the excitement in the towns and villages through which he passed was extreme. Wherever he went he was greeted and feasted like a king returning from victorious wars; the people lined the streets of the towns and villages, and hung out banners, and gazed their fill at the Indians and at the strange sun-burned faces of the crew. At Barcelona, where they arrived towards the end of April, the climax of these glittering dignities was reached. When the King and Queen heard that Columbus was approaching the town they had their throne prepared under a magnificent pavilion, and in the hot sunshine of that April day they sat and waited the coming of the great man. A glittering troop of cavalry had been sent out to meet him, and at the gates of the town a procession was formed similar to that at Seville. He had now six natives with him, who occupied an important

place in the procession; sailors also, who carried baskets of fruit and vegetables from Española, with stuffed birds and animals, and a monstrous lizard held aloft on a stick. The Indians were duly decked out in all their paint and feathers; but if they were a wonder and marvel to the people of Spain, what must Spain have been to them with its great buildings and cities, its carriages and horses, its glittering dresses and armours, its splendour and luxury! We have no record of what the Indians thought, only of what the crowd thought who gaped upon them and upon the gaudy parrots that screeched and fluttered also in the procession. Columbus came riding on horseback, as befitted a great Admiral and Viceroy, surrounded by his pilots and principal officers; and followed by men bearing golden belts, golden masks, nuggets of gold and dust of gold, and preceded by heralds, pursuivants, and mace-bearers.

What a return for the man who three years before had been pointed at and laughed to scorn in this same brilliant society! The crowds pressed so closely that the procession could hardly get through the streets; the whole population was there to witness it; and the windows and balconies and roofs of the houses, as well as the streets themselves, were thronged with a gaily dressed and wildly excited crowd. At length the procession reaches the presence of the King and Queen and, crowning and unprecedented honour! as the Admiral comes before them Ferdinand and Isabella rise to greet him. Under their own royal canopy a seat is waiting

for him; and when he has made his ceremonial greeting he is invited to sit in their presence and give an account of his voyage.

He is fully equal to the situation; settles down to do himself and his subject justice; begins, we may be sure, with a preamble about the providence of God and its wisdom and consistency in preserving the narrator and preparing his life for this great deed; putting in a deal of scientific talk which had in truth nothing to do with the event, but was always applied to it in Columbus's writings from this date onwards; and going on to describe the voyage, the sea of weeds, the landfall, his intercourse with the natives, their aptitude for labour and Christianity, and the hopes he has of their early conversion to the Catholic Church. And then follows a long description of the wonderful climate, "like May in Andalusia," the noble rivers, and gorgeous scenery, the trees and fruits and flowers and singing birds; the spices and the cotton; and chief of all, the vast stores of gold and pearls of which the Admiral had brought home specimens. At various stages in his narrative he produces illustrations; now a root of rhubarb or allspice; now a raw nugget of gold; now a piece of gold laboured into a mask or belt; now a native decorated with the barbaric ornaments that were the fashion in Española. These things, says Columbus, are mere first-fruits of the harvest that is to come; the things which he, like the dove that had flown across the sea from the Ark and brought back an olive leaf in its mouth, has brought

back across the stormy seas to that Ark of civilisation from which he had flown forth. It was to Columbus an opportunity of stretching his visionary wings and creating with pompous words and images a great halo round himself of dignity and wonder and divine distinction; an opportunity such as he loved, and such as he never failed to make use of.

The Sovereigns were delighted and profoundly impressed. Columbus wound up his address with an eloquent peroration concerning the glory to Christendom of these new discoveries; and there followed an impressive silence, during which the Sovereigns sank on their knees and raised hands and tearful eyes to heaven, an example in which they were followed by the whole of the assembly; and an appropriate gesture enough, seeing what was to come of it all. The choir of the Chapel Royal sang a solemn *Te Deum* on the spot; and the Sovereigns and nobles, bishops, archbishops, grandees, hidalgos, chamberlains, treasurers, chancellors and other courtiers, being exhausted by these emotions, retired to dinner.

During his stay at Barcelona Columbus was the guest of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo, and moved thus in an atmosphere of combined temporal and spiritual dignity such as his soul loved. Very agreeable indeed to him was the honour shown to him at this time. Deep down in his heart there was a secret nerve of pride and

vanity which throughout his life hitherto had been continually mortified and wounded; but he was able now to indulge his appetite for outward pomp and honour as much as he pleased. When King Ferdinand went out to ride Columbus would be seen riding on one side of him, the young Prince John riding on the other side; and everywhere, when he moved among the respectful and admiring throng, his grave face was seen to be wreathed in complacent smiles. His hair, which had turned white soon after he was thirty, gave him a dignified and almost venerable appearance, although he was only in his forty-third year; and combined with his handsome and commanding presence to excite immense enthusiasm among the Spaniards. They forgot for the moment what they had formerly remembered and were to remember again—that he was a foreigner, an Italian, a man of no family and of poor origin. They saw in him the figure-head of a new empire and a new glory, an emblem of power and riches, of the dominion which their proud souls loved; and so there beamed upon him the brief fickle sunshine of their smiles and favour, which he in his delusion regarded as an earnest of their permanent honour and esteem.

It is almost always thus with a man not born to such dignities, and who comes by them through his own efforts and labours. No one would grudge him the short-lived happiness of these summer weeks; but although he believed himself to be as happy as a man can be, he appears to quietly contemplating eyes less happy and

fortunate than when he stood alone on the deck of his ship, surrounded by an untrustworthy crew, prevailing by his own unaided efforts over the difficulties and dangers with which he was surrounded. Court functions and processions, and the companionship of kings and cardinals, are indeed no suitable reward for the kind of work that he did. Courtly dignities are suited to courtly services; but they are no suitable crown for rough labour and hardship at sea, or for the fulfilment of a man's self by lights within him; no suitable crown for any solitary labour whatsoever, which must always be its own and only reward.

It is to this period of splendour that the story of the egg, which is to some people the only familiar incident in Columbian biography, is attributed. The story is that at a banquet given by the Cardinal-Archbishop the conversation ran, as it always did in those days when he was present, on the subject of the Admiral's discoveries; and that one of the guests remarked that it was all very well for Columbus to have done what he did, but that in a country like Spain, where there were so many men learned in science and cosmography, and many able mariners besides, some one else would certainly have been found who would have done the same thing. Whereupon Columbus, calling for an egg, laid a wager that no one of the company but himself could make it stand on its end without support.

The egg was brought and passed round, and every one tried to make it stand on end, but without success. When it came to Columbus he cracked the shell at one end, making a flat surface on which the egg stood upright; thus demonstrating that a thing might be wonderful, not because it was difficult or impossible, but merely because no one had ever thought of doing it before. A sufficiently inane story, and by no means certainly true; but there is enough character in this little feat, ponderous, deliberate, pompous, ostentatious, and at bottom a trick and deceitful quibble, to make it accord with the grandiloquent public manner of Columbus, and to make it easily believable of one who chose to show himself in his speech and writings so much more meanly and pretentiously than he showed himself in the true acts and business of his life.

But pomp and parade were not the only occupation of these Barcelona days. There were long consultations with Ferdinand and Isabella about the colonisation of the new lands; there were intrigues, and parrying of intrigues, between the Spanish and Portuguese Courts on the subject of the discoveries and of the representative rights of the two nations to be the religious saviours of the New World. The Pope, to whose hands the heathen were entrusted by God to be handed for an inheritance to the highest and most religious bidder, had at that time innocently divided them into two portions, to

wit: heathen to the south of Spain and Portugal, and heathen to the west of those places. By the Bull of 1438, granted by Pope Martin V., the heathen to the west had been given to the Spanish, and the heathen to the south to the Portuguese, and the two crowns had in 1479 come to a working agreement. Now, however, the existence of more heathen to the west of the Azores introduced a new complication, and Ferdinand sent a message to Pope Alexander VI. praying for a confirmation of the Spanish title to the new discoveries.

This Pope, who was a native of Aragon and had been a subject of Ferdinand, was a stolid, perverse, and stubborn being; so much is advertised in his low forehead, impudent prominent nose, thick sensual lips, and stout bull neck. This Pope considers the matter; considers, by such lights as he has, to whom he shall entrust the souls of these new heathen; considers which country, Spain or Portugal, is most likely to hold and use the same for the increase of the Christian faith in general, the furtherance of the Holy Catholic Church in special, and the aggrandisement of Popes in particular; and shrewdly decides that the country in which the Inquisition can flourish is the country to whom the heathen souls should be entrusted. He therefore issues a Bull, dated May 3, 1493, granting to the Spanish the possession of all lands, not occupied by Christian powers, that lie west of a meridian drawn one hundred leagues to the westward of the Azores, and to the Portuguese possession of all similar lands lying to the eastward of

that line. He sleeps upon this Bull, and has inspiration; and on the morrow, May 4th, issues another Bull, drawing a line from the arctic to the antarctic pole, and granting to Spain all heathen inheritance to the westward of the same. The Pope, having signed this Bull, considers it further—assisted, no doubt, by the Portuguese Ambassador at the Vatican, to whom it has been shown; realises that in the wording of the Bull an injustice has been done to Portugal, since Spain is allowed to fix very much at her own convenience the point at which the line drawn from pole to pole shall cut the equator; and also because, although Spain is given all the lands in existence within her territory, Portugal is only given the lands which she may actually have occupied. Even the legal mind of the Pope, although much drowsed and blunted by brutish excesses, discerns faultiness in this document; and consequently on the same day issues a third Bull, in which the injustice to Portugal is redressed. Nothing so easy, thinks the Pope, as to issue Bulls; if you make a mistake in one Bull, issue another; and, having issued three Bulls in twenty-four hours, he desists for the present, having divided the earthly globe.

Thus easy it is for a Pope to draw lines from pole to pole, and across the deep of the sea. Yet the poles sleep still in their icy virginal sanctity, and the blue waves through which that papal line passes shift and shimmer and roll in their free salt loneliness, unaffected by his demarcation; the heathen also, it appears, since that distant day, have had something to say to their

disposition. If he had slept upon it another night, poor Pope, it might have occurred to him that west and east might meet on a meridian situated elsewhere on the globe than one hundred miles west of the Azores; and that the Portuguese, who for the moment had nothing heathen except Africa left to them, might according to his demarcation strike a still richer vein of heathendom than that granted to Spain. But the holy Pontiff, bull neck, low forehead, impudent prominent nose, and sensual lips notwithstanding, is exhausted by his cosmographical efforts, and he lets it rest at that. Later, when Spain discovers that her privileges have been abated, he will have to issue another Bull; but not to-day. Sufficient unto the day are the Bulls thereof. For the moment King proposes and Pope disposes; but the matter lies ultimately in the hands of the two eternal protagonists, man and God.

In the meantime here are six heathen alive and well, or at any rate well enough to support, willy-nilly, the rite of holy baptism. They must have been sufficiently dazed and bewildered by all that had happened to them since they were taken on board the Admiral's ship, and God alone knows what they thought of it all, or whether they thought anything more than the parrots that screamed and fluttered and winked circular eyes in the procession with them. Doubtless they were willing enough; and indeed, after all they had come through, a little cold water could not do them any harm. So baptized they

were in Barcelona; pompously baptized with infinite state and ceremony, the King and Queen and Prince Juan officiating as sponsors. Queen Isabella, after the manner of queens, took a kindly feminine interest in these heathen, and in their brethren across the sea. She had seen a good deal of conquest, and knew her Spaniard pretty intimately; and doubtless her maternal heart had some misgivings about the ultimate happiness of the gentle, handsome creatures who lived in the sunshine in that distant place. She made their souls her especial care, and honestly believed that by providing for their spiritual conversion she was doing them the greatest service in her power. She provided from her own private chapel vestments and altar furniture for the mission church in Española; she had the six exiles in Barcelona instructed under her eye; and she gave Columbus special orders to inflict severe punishments on any one who should offer the natives violence or injustice of any kind. It must be remembered to her credit that in after days, when slavery and an intolerable bloody and brutish oppression had turned the paradise of Española into a shambles, she fought almost single-handed, and with an ethical sense far in advance of her day, against the system of slavery practised by Spain upon the inhabitants of the New World.

The dignities that had been provisionally granted to Columbus before his departure on the first voyage were

now elaborately confirmed; and in addition he was given another title—that of Captain-General of the large fleet which was to be fitted out to sail to the new colonies. He was entrusted with the royal seal, which gave him the right to grant letters patent, to issue commissions, and to appoint deputies in the royal name. A coat-of-arms was also granted to him in which, in its original form, the lion and castle of Leon and Castile were quartered with islands of the sea *or* on a field *azure*, and five anchors *or* on a field *azure*. This was changed from time to time, chiefly by Columbus himself, who afterwards added a continent to the islands, and modified the blazonry of the lion and castle to agree with those on the royal arms—a piece of ignorance and childish arrogance which was quite characteristic of him.[1]

Equally characteristic and less excusable was his acceptance of the pension of ten thousand maravedis which had been offered to the member of the expedition who should first sight land. Columbus was granted a very large gratuity on his arrival in Barcelona, and even taking the product of the islands at a tenth part of their value as

[1] A motto has since been associated with the coat-of-arms, although it is not certain that Columbus adopted it in his lifetime. In one form it reads:

"Por Castilla é por Léon
Nueva Mundo halló Colon."

(For Castile and Leon Columbus found a New World.)

And in the other:

"A Castilla y a Léon
Nuevo Mundo dió Colon."

(To Castile and Leon Columbus gave a New World.)

estimated by him, he still had every right to suppose himself one of the richest men in Spain. Yet he accepted this paltry pension of £8. 6s. 8d. in our modern money, which, taking the increase in the purchasing power of money at an extreme estimate, would not be more than the equivalent of £80 or $385 now. Now Columbus had not been the first person to see land; he saw the light, but it was Rodrigo de Triana, the look-out man on the *Pinta*, who first saw the actual land. Columbus in his narrative to the King and Queen would be sure to make much of the seeing of the light, and not so much of the actual sighting of land; and he was on the spot, and the reward was granted to him. Even if we assume that in strict equity Columbus was entitled to it, it was at least a matter capable of argument, if only Rodrigo de Triana had been there to argue it; and what are we to think of the Admiral of the Ocean Seas and Viceroy of the Indies who thus takes what can only be called a mean advantage of a poor seaman in his employ? It would have been a competence and a snug little fortune to Rodrigo de Triana; it was a mere flea-bite to a man who was thinking in eighth parts of continents. It may be true, as Oviedo alleges, that Columbus transferred it to Beatriz Enriquez; but he had no right to provide for her out of money that in all equity and decency ought to have gone to another and a poorer man. His biographers, some of whom have vied with his canonisers in insisting upon seeing virtue in his every action, have gone to all kinds of ridiculous extremes in accounting

for this piece of meanness. Irving says that it was "a subject in which his whole ambition was involved"; but a plain person will regard it as an instance of greed and love of money. We must not shirk facts like this if we wish to know the man as he really was. That he was capable of kindness and generosity, and that he was in the main kind-hearted, we have fortunately no reason to doubt; and if I dwell on some of his less amiable characteristics it is with no desire to magnify them out of their due proportion. They are part of that side of him that lay in shadow, as some side of each one of us lies; for not all by light nor all by shade, but by light and shade combined, is the image of a man made visible to us.

It is quite of a piece with the character of Columbus that while he was writing a receipt for the look-out man's money and thinking what a pretty gift it would make for Beatriz Enriquez he was planning a splendid and spectacular thank-offering for all the dignities to which he had been raised; and, brooding upon the vast wealth that was now to be his, that he should register a vow to furnish within seven years an expedition of four thousand horse and fifty thousand foot for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, and a similar force within five years after the first if it should be necessary. It was probable that the vow was a provisional one, and that its performance was to be contingent on his actual

receipt and possession of the expected money; for as we know, there was no money and no expedition. The vow was in effect a kind of religious flourish much beloved by Columbus, undertaken seriously and piously enough, but belonging rather to his public than to his private side. A much more simple and truly pious act of his was, not the promising of visionary but the sending of actual money to his old father in Savona, which he did immediately after his arrival in Spain. The letter which he wrote with that kindly remittance, not being couched in the pompous terms which he thought suitable for princes, and doubtless giving a brief homely account of what he had done, would, if we could come by it, be a document beyond all price; but like every other record of his family life it has utterly perished. He wrote also from Barcelona to his two brothers, Bartholomew and Giacomo, or James, since we may as well give him the English equivalent of his name. Bartholomew was in France, whither he had gone some time after his return from his memorable voyage with Bartholomew Diaz; he was employed as a map-maker at the court of Anne de Beaujeu, who was reigning in the temporary absence of her brother Charles VIII. Columbus's letter reached him, but much too late for him to be able to join in the second expedition; in fact he did not reach Seville until five months after it had sailed. James, however, who was now twenty-five years old, was still at Savona; he, like Columbus, had been apprenticed to his father, but had apparently remained

at home earning his living either as a wool-weaver or merchant. He was a quiet, discreet young fellow, who never pushed himself forward very much, wore very plain clothes, and was apparently much overawed by the grandeur and dignity of his elder brother. He was, however, given a responsible post in the new expedition, and soon had his fill of adventure.

The business of preparing for the new expedition was now put in hand, and Columbus, having taken leave of Ferdinand and Isabella, went to Seville to superintend the preparations. All the ports in Andalusia were ordered to supply such vessels as might be required at a reasonable cost, and the old order empowering the Admiral to press mariners into the service was renewed. But this time it was unnecessary; the difficulty now was rather to keep down the number of applicants for berths in the expedition, and to select from among the crowd of adventurers who offered themselves those most suitable for the purposes of the new colony. In this work Columbus was assisted by a commissioner whom the Sovereigns had appointed to superintend the fitting out of the expedition. This man was a cleric, Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, Archdeacon of Seville, a person of excellent family and doubtless of high piety, and of a surpassing shrewdness for this work. He was of a type very commonly produced in Spain at this period; a very able organiser, crafty and competent, but not altogether

trustworthy on a point of honour. Like so many ecclesiastics of this stamp, he lived for as much power and influence as he could achieve; and though he was afterwards bishop of three sees successively, and became Patriarch of the Indies, he never let go his hold on temporal affairs. He began by being jealous of Columbus, and by objecting to the personal retinue demanded by the Admiral; and in this, if I know anything of the Admiral, he was probably justified. The matter was referred to the Sovereigns, who ordered Fonseca to carry out the Admiral's wishes; and the two were immediately at loggerheads. When the Council for the Indies was afterwards formed Fonseca became head of it, and had much power to make things pleasant or otherwise for Columbus.

It became necessary now to raise a considerable sum of money for the new expedition. Two-thirds of the ecclesiastical tithes were appropriated, and a large proportion of the confiscated property of the Jews who had been banished from Spain the year before; but this was not enough; and five million maravedis were borrowed from the Duke of Medina Sidonia in order to complete the financial supplies necessary for this very costly expedition. There was a treasurer, Francisco Pinelo, and an accountant, Juan de Soria, who had charge of all the financial arrangements; but the whole of the preparations were conducted on a ruinously expensive scale, owing to the haste which the diplomatic relations with Portugal made necessary. The provisioning was done by a Florentine merchant named Juonato Beradi, who

had an assistant named Amerigo Vespucci—who, by a strange accident, was afterwards to give his name to the continent of the New World.

While these preparations were going on the game of diplomacy was being played between the Courts of Spain and Portugal. King John of Portugal had the misfortune to be badly advised; and he was persuaded that, although he had lost the right to the New World through his rejection of Columbus's services when they were first offered to him, he might still discover it for himself, relying for protection on the vague wording of the papal Bulls. He immediately began to prepare a fleet, nominally to go to the coast of Africa, but really to visit the newly discovered lands in the west. Hearing of these preparations, King Ferdinand sent an Ambassador to the Portuguese Court; and King John agreed also to appoint an Ambassador to discuss the whole matter of the line of demarcation, and in the meantime not to allow any of his ships to sail to the west for a period of sixty days after his Ambassador had reached Barcelona. There followed a good deal of diplomatic sharp practice; the Portuguese bribing the Spanish officials to give them information as to what was going on, and the Spaniards furnishing their envoys with double sets of letters and documents so that they could be prepared to counter any movement on the part of King John. The idea of the Portuguese was that the line of

demarcation should be a parallel rather than a meridian; and that everything north of the Canaries should belong to Spain and everything south to Portugal; but this would never do from the Spanish point of view. The fact that a proposal had come from Portugal, however, gave Ferdinand an opportunity of delaying the diplomatic proceedings until his own expedition was actually ready to set sail; and he wrote to Columbus repeatedly, urging him to make all possible haste with his preparations. In the meantime he despatched a solemn embassy to Portugal, the purport of which, much beclouded and delayed by preliminary and impossible proposals, was to submit the whole question to the Pope for arbitration. And all the time he was busy petitioning the Pope to restore to Spain those concessions granted in the second Bull, but taken away again in the third.

This, being much egged on to it, the Pope ultimately did; waking up on September 26th, the day after Columbus's departure, and issuing another Bull in which the Spanish Sovereigns were given all lands and islands, discovered or not discovered, which might be found by sailing west and south. Four Bulls; and after puzzling over them for a year, the Kings of Spain and Portugal decided to make their own Bull, and abide by it, which, having appointed commissioners, they did on June 7, 1494, when by the Treaty of Tordecillas the line of demarcation was finally fixed to pass from north to south through a point 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands.

CHAPTER V

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

JULY, August, and September in the year 1493 were busy months for Columbus, who had to superintend the buying or building and fitting of ships, the choice and collection of stores, and the selection of his company. There were fourteen caravels, some of them of low tonnage and light draught, and suitable for the navigation of rivers; and three large carracks, or ships of three to four hundred tons. The number of volunteers asked for was a thousand, but at least two thousand applied for permission to go with the expedition, and ultimately some fourteen or fifteen hundred did actually go, one hundred stowaways being included in the number. Unfortunately these adventurers were of a class compared with whom even the cut-throats and gaol-birds of the humble little expedition that had sailed the year before from Palos were useful and efficient. The universal impression about the new lands in the West was that they were places where fortunes could be picked up like dirt, and where the very shores were strewn with gold and precious stones; and every idle scamp in Spain who had a taste for adventure and a desire to get a great deal of money without working for

it was anxious to visit the new territory. The result was that instead of artisans, farmers, craftsmen, and colonists, Columbus took with him a company at least half of which consisted of exceedingly well-bred young gentlemen who had no intention of doing any work, but who looked forward to a free and lawless holiday and an early return crowned with wealth and fortune. Although the expedition was primarily for the establishment of a colony, no Spanish women accompanied it; and this was but one of a succession of mistakes and stupidities.

The Admiral, however, was not to be so lonely a person as he had been on his first voyage; friends of his own choice and of a rank that made intimacy possible even with the Captain-General were to accompany him. There was James his brother; there was Friar Bernardo Buïl, a Benedictine monk chosen by the Pope to be his apostolic vicar in the New World; there was Alonso de Ojeda, a handsome young aristocrat, cousin to the Inquisitor of Spain, who was distinguished for his dash and strength and pluck; an ideal adventurer, the idol of his fellows, and one of whose daring any number of credible and incredible tales were told. There was Pedro Margarite, a well-born Aragonese, who was destined afterwards to cause much trouble; there was Juan Ponce de Leon, the discoverer of Florida; there was Juan de La Cosa, Columbus's faithful pilot on the *Santa Maria* on his first voyage; there was Pedro de Las Casas, whose son, at this time a student in Seville, was afterwards

to become the historian of the New World and the champion of decency and humanity there. There was also Doctor Chanca, a Court physician who accompanied the expedition not only in his professional capacity but also because his knowledge of botany would enable him to make a valuable report on the vegetables and fruits of the New World; there was Antonio de Marchena, one of Columbus's oldest friends, who went as astronomer to the expedition. And there was one Coma, who would have remained unknown to this day but that he wrote an exceedingly elegant letter to his friend Nicolo Syllacio in Italy, describing in flowery language the events of the second voyage; which letter, and one written by Doctor Chanca, are the only records of the outward voyage that exist. The Journal kept by Columbus on this voyage has been lost, and no copy of it remains.

Columbus settled at Cadiz during the time in which he was engaged upon the fitting out of the expedition. It was no light matter to superintend the appointment of the crews and passengers, every one of whom was probably interviewed by Columbus himself, and at the same time to keep level with Archdeacon Fonseca. This official, it will be remembered, had a disagreement with Columbus as to the number of personal attendants he was to be allowed; and on the matter being referred to the King and Queen they granted Columbus the ridiculous establishment of ten footmen and twenty other servants.

Naturally Fonseca held up his hands and wondered where it would all end. It was no easy matter, moreover, on receipt of letters from the Queen about small matters which occurred to her from time to time, to answer them fully and satisfactorily, and at the same time to make out all the lists of things that would likely be required both for provisioning the voyage and establishing a colony. The provisions carried in those days were not very different from the provisions carried on deep-sea vessels at the present time—except that canned meat, for which, with its horrors and conveniences, the world may hold Columbus responsible, had not then been invented. Unmilled wheat, salted flour, and hard biscuit formed the bulk of the provisions; salted pork was the staple of the meat supply, with an alternative of salted fish; while cheese, peas, lentils and beans, oil and vinegar, were also carried, and honey and almonds and raisins for the cabin table. Besides water a large provision of rough wine in casks was taken, and the dietary scale would probably compare favourably with that of the British and American mercantile service sixty years ago. In addition a great quantity of seeds of all kinds were taken for planting in Española; sugar cane, rice, and vines also, and an equipment of agricultural implements, as well as a selection of horses and other domestic animals for breeding purposes. Twenty mounted soldiers were also carried, and the thousand and one impedimenta of naval, military, and domestic existence.

In the middle of all these preparations news came

that a Portuguese caravel had set sail from Madeira in the direction of the new lands. Columbus immediately reported this to the King and Queen, and suggested detaching part of his fleet to pursue her; but instead King John was communicated with, and he declared that if the vessel had sailed as alleged it was without his knowledge and permission, and that he would send three ships after her to recall her—an answer which had to be accepted, although it opened up rather alarming possibilities of four Portuguese vessels reaching the new islands instead of one. Whether these ships ever really sailed or not, or whether the rumour was merely a rumour and an alarm, is not certain; but Columbus was ordered to push on his preparations with the greatest possible speed, to avoid Portuguese waters, but to capture any vessels which he might find in the part of the ocean allotted to Spain, and to inflict summary punishment on the crews. As it turned out he never saw any Portuguese vessels, and before he had returned to Spain again the two nations had come to an amicable agreement quite independently of the Pope and his Bulls. Spain undertook to make no discoveries to the east of the line of demarcation, and Portugal none to the west of it; and so the matter remained until the inhabitants of the discovered lands began to have a voice in their own affairs.

With all his occupations Columbus found time for some amenities, and he had his two sons, Diego and

Ferdinand, staying with him at Cadiz. Great days they must have been for these two boys; days filled with excitement and commotion, with the smell of tar and the loading of the innumerable and fascinating materials of life; and many a journey they must have made on the calm waters of Cadiz harbour from ship to ship, dreaming of the distant seas that these high, quaintly-carven prows would soon be treading, and the wonderful bays and harbours far away across the world into the waters of which their anchors were to plunge.

September 24th, the day before the fleet sailed, was observed as a festival, and in full ceremonial the blessing of God upon the enterprise was invoked. The ships were hung with flags and with dyed silks and tapestries; every vessel flew the royal standard; and the waters of the harbour resounded with the music of trumpets and harps and pipes and the thunder of artillery. Some Venetian galleys happened to enter the harbour as the fleet was preparing to weigh, and they joined in the salutes and demonstrations which signalled the departure. The Admiral hoisted his flag on the *Marigalante*, one of the largest of the ships; and somewhere among the smaller caravels the little *Niña*, re-caulked and re-fitted, was also preparing to brave again the dangers over which she had so staunchly prevailed. At sunrise on the 25th the fleet weighed anchor, with all the circumstance and bustle and apparent confusion that accompanies the

business of sailing-ships getting under weigh. Up to the last minute Columbus had his two sons on board with him, and it was not until the ripples were beginning to talk under the bow of the *Marigalante* that he said good-bye to them and saw them rowed ashore. In bright weather, with a favourable breeze, in glory and dignity, and with high hopes in his heart, the Admiral set out once more on the long sea-road.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND VOYAGE

THE second voyage of Columbus, profoundly interesting as it must have been to him and to the numerous company to whom these waters were a strange and new region, has not the romantic interest for us that his first voyage had. To the faith that guided him on his first venture knowledge and certainty had now been added; he was going by a familiar road; for to the mariner a road that he has once followed is a road that he knows. As a matter of fact, however, this second voyage was a far greater test of Columbus's skill as a navigator than the first voyage had been. If his navigation had been more haphazard he might never have found again the islands of his first discovery; and the fact that he made a landfall exactly where he wished to make it shows a high degree of exactness in his method of ascertaining latitude, and is another instance of his skill in estimating his dead-reckoning. If he had been equipped with a modern quadrant and Greenwich chronometers he could not have made a quicker voyage nor a more exact landfall.

It will be remembered that he had been obliged to

hurry away from Española without visiting the islands of the Caribs as he had wished to do. He knew that these islands lay to the south-east of Española, and on his second voyage he therefore took a course rather more southerly in order to make them instead of Guanahani or Española. From the day they left Spain his ships had pleasant light airs from the east and north-east which wafted them steadily but slowly on their course. In a week they had reached the Grand Canary, where they paused to make some repairs to one of the ships which was leaking. Two days later they anchored at Gomera, and loaded up with such supplies as could be procured there better than in Spain. Pigs, goats, sheep and cows were taken on board; domestic fowls also, and a variety of orchard plants and fruit seeds, as well as a provision of oranges, lemons, and melons. They sailed from Gomera on the 7th of October, but the winds were so light that it was a week later before they had passed Ferro and were once more in the open Atlantic.

On setting his course from Ferro Columbus issued sealed instructions to the captain of each ship which, in the event of the fleet becoming scattered, would guide them to the harbour of La Navidad in Española; but the captains had strict orders not to open these instructions unless their ships became separated from the fleet, as Columbus still wished to hold for himself the secret of this mysterious road to the west. There were no disasters, however, and no separations. The trade wind blew soft and steady, wafting them south and west; and

because of the more southerly course steered on this voyage they did not even encounter the weed of the Sargasso Sea, which they left many leagues on their starboard hand. The only incident of the voyage was a sudden severe hurricane, a brief summer tempest which raged throughout one night and terrified a good many of the voyagers, whose superstitious fears were only allayed when they saw the lambent flames of the light of Saint Elmo playing about the rigging of the Admiral's ship. It was just the Admiral's luck that this phenomenon should be observed over his ship and over none of the others; it added to his prestige as a person peculiarly favoured by the divine protection, and confirmed his own belief that he held a heavenly as well as a royal commission.

The water supply had been calculated a little too closely, and began to run low. The hurried preparation of the ships had resulted as usual in bad work; most of them were leaking, and the crew were constantly at work at the pumps; and there was the usual discontent. Columbus, however, knew by the signs as well as by his dead-reckoning that he was somewhere close to land; and with a fine demonstration of confidence he increased the ration of water, instead of lowering it, assuring the crews that they would be ashore in a day or two. On Saturday evening, November 2nd, although no land was in sight, Columbus was so sure of his position that he ordered the fleet to take in sail and go on slowly until morning. As the Sunday dawned and the sky to

the west was cleared of the morning bank of clouds the look-out on the *Marigalante* reported land ahead; and sure enough the first sunlight of that day showed them a green and verdant island a few leagues away.

As they approached it Columbus christened it Dominica in honour of the day on which it was discovered. He sailed round it; but as there was no harbour, and as another island was in sight to the north, he sailed on in that direction. This little island he christened Marigalante; and going ashore with his retinue he hoisted the royal banner, and formally took possession of the whole group of six islands which were visible from the high ground. There were no inhabitants on the island, but the voyagers spent some hours wandering about its tangled woods and smelling the rich odours of spice, and tasting new and unfamiliar fruits. They next sailed on to an island to the north which Columbus christened Guadaloupe as a memorial of the shrine in Estremadura to which he had made a pious pilgrimage. They landed on this island and remained a week there, in the course of which they made some very remarkable discoveries.

The villagers were not altogether unfriendly, although they were shy at first; but red caps and hawks' bells had their usual effect. There were signs of warfare, in the shape of bone-tipped arrows; there were tame parrots much larger than those of the northern islands; they found pottery and rough wood carving, and the unmistakable stern timber of a European vessel. But they discovered stranger things than that. They found human

skulls used as household utensils, and gruesome fragments of human bodies, unmistakable remains of a feast; and they realised that at last they were in the presence of a man-eating tribe. Later they came to know something of the habits of the islanders; how they made raiding expeditions to the neighbouring islands, and carried off large numbers of prisoners, retaining the women as concubines and eating the men. The boys were mutilated and fattened like capons, being employed as labourers until they had arrived at years of discretion, at which point they were killed and eaten, as these cannibal epicures did not care for the flesh of women and boys. There were a great number of women on the island, and many of them were taken off to the ships — with their own consent, according to Doctor Chanca. The men, however, eluded the Spaniards and would not come on board, having doubtless very clear views about the ultimate destination of men who were taken prisoners. Some women from a neighbouring island, who had been captured by the cannibals, came to Columbus and begged to be taken on board his ship for protection; but instead of receiving them he decked them with ornaments and sent them ashore again. The cannibals artfully stripped off their ornaments and sent them back to get some more.

The peculiar habits of the islanders added an unusual excitement to shore leave, and there was as a rule no trouble in collecting the crews and bringing them off to the ships at nightfall. But on one evening it was

discovered that one of the captains and eight men had not returned. An exploring party was sent off to search for them, but they came back without having found anything, except a village in the middle of the forest from which the inhabitants had fled at their approach, leaving behind them in the cooking pots a half-cooked meal of human remains — an incident which gave the explorers a distaste for further search. Young Alonso de Ojeda, however, had no fear of the cannibals; this was just the kind of occasion in which he revelled; and he offered to take a party of forty men into the interior to search for the missing men. He went right across the island, but was able to discover nothing except birds and fruits and unknown trees; and Columbus, in great distress of mind, had to give up his men for lost. He took in wood and water, and was on the point of weighing anchor when the missing men appeared on the shore and signalled for a boat. It appeared that they had got lost in a tangled forest in the interior, that they had tried to climb the trees in order to get their bearings by the stars, but without success; and that they had finally struck the sea-shore and followed it until they had arrived opposite the anchorage.

They brought some women and boys with them, and the fleet must now have had a large number of these willing or unwilling captives. This was the first organised transaction of slavery on the part of Columbus, whose design was to send slaves regularly back to Spain in exchange for the cattle and supplies necessary for the

colonies. There was not very much said now about religious conversion, but only about exchanging the natives for cattle. The fine point of Christopher's philosophy on this subject had been rubbed off; he had taken the first step a year ago on the beach at Guanahani, and after that the road opened out broad before him. Slaves for cattle, and cattle for the islands; and wealth from cattle and islands for Spain, and payment from Spain for Columbus, and money from Columbus for the redemption of the Holy Sepulchre—these were the links in the chain of hope that bound him to his pious idea. He had seen the same thing done by the Portuguese on the Guinea coast, and it never occurred to him that there was anything the matter with it. On the contrary, at this time his idea was only to take slaves from among the Caribs and man-eating islanders as a punishment for their misdeeds; but this, like his other fine ideas, soon had to give way before the tide of greed and conquest.

The Admiral was now anxious to get back to La Navidad, and discover the condition of the colony which he had left behind him there. He therefore sailed from Guadaloupe on November 10th and steered to the north-west. His captive islanders told him that the mainland lay to the south; and if he had listened to them and sailed south he would have probably landed on the coast of South America in a fortnight. He

shaped his course instead to the north-west, passing many islands, but not pausing until the 14th, when he reached the island named by him Santa Cruz. He found more Caribs here, and his men had a brush with them, one of the crew being wounded by a poisoned arrow of which he died in a few days. The Carib Chiefs were captured and put in irons. They sailed again and passed a group of islets which Columbus named after Saint Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins; discovered Porto Rico also, in one of the beautiful harbours of which they anchored and stayed for two days. Sailing now to the west they made land again on the 22nd of November; and coasting along it they soon sighted the mountain of Monte Christi, and Columbus recognised that he was on the north coast of Española.

CHAPTER VII

THE EARTHLY PARADISE REVISITED

ON the 25th November 1493, Columbus once more dropped his anchor in the harbour of Monte Christi, and a party was sent ashore to prospect for a site suitable for the new town which he intended to build, for he was not satisfied with the situation of La Navidad. There was a large river close by; and while the party was surveying the land they came suddenly upon two dead bodies lying by the river-side, one with a rope round its neck and the other with a rope round its feet. The bodies were too much decomposed to be recognisable; nevertheless to the party rambling about in the sunshine and stillness of that green place the discovery was a very gruesome one. They may have thought much, but they said little. They returned to the ship, and resumed their search on the next day, when they found two more corpses, one of which was seen to have a large quantity of beard. As all the natives were beardless this was a very significant and unpleasant discovery, and the explorers returned at once and reported what they had seen to Columbus. He thereupon set sail for La Navidad, but the navigation off that part of the coast was necessarily slow

because of the number of the shoals and banks, on one of which the Admiral's ship had been lost the year before; and the short voyage occupied three days.

They arrived at La Navidad late on the evening of the 27th—too late to make it advisable to land. Some natives came out in a canoe, rowed round the Admiral's ship, stopped and looked at it, and then rowed away again. When the fleet had anchored Columbus ordered two guns to be fired; but there was no response except from the echoes that went rattling among the islands, and from the frightened birds that rose screaming and circling from the shore. No guns and no signal fires; no sign of human habitation whatever; and no sound out of the weird darkness except the lap of the water and the call of the birds. . . . The night passed in anxiety and depression, and in a certain degree of nervous tension, which was relieved at two or three o'clock in the morning by the sound of paddles and the looming of a canoe through the dusky starlight. Native voices were heard from the canoe asking in a loud voice for the Admiral; and when the visitors had been directed to the *Marigalante* they refused to go on board until Columbus himself had spoken to them, and they had seen by the light of a lantern that it was the Admiral himself. The chief of them was a cousin of Guacanagari, who said that the King was ill of a wound in his leg, or that he would certainly have come himself to welcome the Admiral. The Spaniards? Yes, they were well, said the young chief; or rather, he added ominously, those

that remained were well, but some had died of illness, and some had been killed in quarrels that had arisen among them. He added that the province had been invaded by two neighbouring kings who had burned many of the native houses. This news, although grave, was a relief from the dreadful uncertainty that had prevailed in the early part of the night, and the Admiral's company, somewhat consoled, took a little sleep.

In the morning a party was sent ashore to La Navidad. Not a boat was in sight, nor any native canoes; the harbour was silent and deserted. When the party had landed and gone up to the place where the fort had been built they found no fort there; only the blackened and charred remains of a fort. The whole thing had been burned level with the ground, and amid the blackened ruins they found pieces of rag and clothing. The natives, instead of coming to greet them, lurked guiltily behind trees, and when they were seen fled away into the woods. All this was very disquieting indeed, and in significant contrast to their behaviour of the year before. The party from the ship threw buttons and beads and bells to the retiring natives in order to try and induce them to come forward, but only four approached, one of whom was a relation of Guacanagari. These four consented to go into the boat and to be rowed out to the ship. Columbus then spoke to them through his interpreter; and they admitted what had been only too obvious to the party that went ashore—that the Spaniards were all dead, and that not one of the garrison remained. It seemed that

two neighbouring kings, Caonabo and Mayreni, had made an attack upon the fort, burned the buildings, and killed and wounded most of the defenders; and that Guacanagari, who had been fighting on their behalf, had also been wounded and been obliged to retire. The natives offered to go and fetch Guacanagari himself, and departed with that object.

In the greatest anxiety the Admiral and his company passed that day and night waiting for the King to come. Early the next morning Columbus himself went ashore and visited the spot where the settlement had been. There he found destruction whole and complete, with nothing but a few rags of clothing as an evidence that the place had ever been inhabited by human beings. As Guacanagari did not appear some of the Spaniards began to suspect that he had had a hand in the matter, and proposed immediate reprisal; but Columbus, believing still in the man who had "loved him so much that it was wonderful" did not take this view, and his belief in Guacanagari's loyalty was confirmed by the discovery that his own dwelling had also been burned down.

Columbus set some of his party searching in the ditch of the fort in case any treasure should have been buried there, as he had ordered it should be in event of danger, and while this was going on he walked along the coast for a few miles to visit a spot which he thought might be suitable for the new settlement. At a distance of a mile or two he found a village of seven or eight huts from which the inhabitants fled at his approach,

carrying such of their goods as were portable, and leaving the rest hidden in the grass. Here were found several things that had belonged to the Spaniards and which were not likely to have been bartered; new Moorish mantles, stockings, bolts of cloth, and one of the Admiral's lost anchors; other articles also, among them a dead man's head wrapped up with great care in a small basket. Shaking their own living heads, Columbus and his party returned. Suddenly they came on some suspicious-looking mounds of earth over which new grass was growing. An examination of these showed them to be the graves of eleven of the Spaniards, the remains of the clothing being quite sufficient to identify them. Doctor Chanca, who examined them, thought that they had not been dead two months. Speculation came to an end in the face of this eloquent certainty; there were the dead bodies of some of the colonists; and the voyagers knelt round with bare heads while the bodies were replaced in the grave and the ceremony of Christian burial performed over them.

Little by little the dismal story was elicited from the natives, who became less timid when they saw that the Spaniards meant them no harm. It seemed that Columbus had no sooner gone away than the colonists began to abandon themselves to every kind of excess. While the echo of the Admiral's wise counsels was yet in their ears they began to disobey his orders. Honest work they had no

intention of doing, and although Diego Arana, their commander, did his best to keep order, and although one or two of the others were faithful to him and to Columbus, their authority was utterly insufficient to check the lawless folly of the rest. Instead of searching for gold mines, they possessed themselves by force of every ounce of gold they could steal or seize from the natives, treating them with both cruelty and contempt. More brutal excesses followed as a matter of course. Guacanagari, in his kindly indulgence and generosity, had allowed them to take three native wives apiece, although he himself and his people were content with one. But of course the Spaniards had thrown off all restraint, however mild, and ran amok among the native inhabitants, seizing their wives and seducing their daughters. Upon this naturally followed dissensions among themselves, jealousy coming hot upon the heels of unlawful possession; and, in the words of Irving, "the natives beheld with astonishment the beings whom they had worshipped as descended from the skies abandoned to the grossest of earthly passions and raging against each other with worse than brutal ferocity."

Upon their strifes and dissensions followed another breach of the Admiral's wise regulations; they no longer cared to remain together in the fort, but split up into groups and went off with their women into the woods, reverting to a savagery beside which the gentle existence of the natives was high civilisation. There were squabbles and fights in which one or two of the Spaniards were

killed; and Pedro Gutierrez and Rodrigo de Escovedo, whom Columbus had appointed as lieutenants to Arana, headed a faction of revolt against his authority, and took themselves off with nine other Spaniards and a great number of women. They had heard a great deal about the mines of Cibao, and they decided to go in search of them and secure their treasures for themselves. They went inland into a territory which was under the rule of King Caonabo, a very fierce Carib who was not a native of Española, but had come there as an adventurer and remained as a conqueror. Although he resented the intrusion of the Spaniards into the island he would not have dared to come and attack them there if they had obeyed the Admiral's orders and remained in the territory of Guacanagari; but when they came into his own country he had them in a trap, and it was easy for him to fall upon those foolish swaggering Spaniards and put them to death. He then decided to go and take the fort.

He formed an alliance with the neighbouring king, Mayreni, whose province was in the west of the island. Getting together a force of warriors these two kings marched rapidly and stealthily through the forest for several days until they arrived at its northern border. They came in the dead of night to the neighbourhood of La Navidad, where the inhabitants of the fortress, some ten in number, were fast asleep. Fast asleep were the remaining dozen or so of the Spaniards who were living in houses or huts in the neighbourhood; fast asleep

also the gentle natives, not dreaming of troubles from any quarter but that close at hand. The sweet silence of the tropical night was suddenly broken by frightful yells as Caonabo and his warriors rushed the fortress and butchered the inhabitants, setting fire to it and to the houses round about. As their flimsy huts burst into flames the surprised Spaniards rushed out, only to be fallen upon by the infuriated blacks. Eight of the Spaniards rushed naked into the sea and were drowned; the rest were butchered. Guacanagari manfully came to their assistance and with his own followers fought throughout the night; but his were a gentle and unwarlike people, and they were easily routed. The King himself was badly wounded in the thigh, but Caonabo's principal object seems to have been the destruction of the Spaniards, and when that was completed he and his warriors, laden with the spoils, retired.

Thus Columbus, walking on the shore with his native interpreter, or sitting in his cabin listening with knitted brow to the accounts of the islanders, learns of the complete and utter failure of his first hopes. It has come to this. These are the real first-fruits of his glorious conquest and discovery. The New World has served but as a virgin field for the Old Adam. He who had sought to bring light and life to these happy islanders had brought darkness and death; they had innocently clasped the sword he had extended to them and cut

themselves. The Christian occupation of the New World had opened with vice, cruelty, and destruction; the veil of innocence had been rent in twain, and could never be mended or joined again. And the Earthly Paradise in which life had gone so happily, of which sun and shower had been the true rulers, and the green sprouting harvests the only riches, had been turned into a shambles by the introduction of human rule and civilised standards of wealth. Gold first and then women, things beautiful and innocent in the happy native condition of the islands, had been the means of the disintegration and death of this first colony. These are serious considerations for any coloniser; solemn considerations for a discoverer who is only on the verge and beginning of his empire-making; mournful considerations for Christopher as he surveys the blackened ruins of the fort, or stands bare-headed by the grass-covered graves.

There seemed to be a certain hesitancy on the part of Guacanagari to present himself; for though he kept announcing his intention of coming to visit the Admiral he did not come. A couple of days after the discovery of the remains, however, he sent a message to Columbus begging him to come and see him, which the Admiral accordingly did, accompanied by a formal retinue and carrying with him the usual presents. Guacanagari was in bed sure enough complaining of a wounded leg, and he told the story of the settlement very much as

Columbus had already heard it from the other natives. He pointed to his own wounded leg as a sign that he had been loyal and faithful to his friendly promises; but when the leg was examined by the surgeon in order that it might be dressed no wound could be discovered, and it was obvious to Doctor Chanca that the skin had not been broken. This seemed odd; Friar Buïl was so convinced that the whole story was a deception that he wished the Admiral to execute Guacanagari on the spot. Columbus, although he was puzzled, was by no means convinced that Guacanagari had been unfaithful to him, and decided to do nothing for the present. He invited the *cacique* to come on board the flagship; which he did, being greatly interested by some of the Carib prisoners, notably a handsome woman, named by the Spaniards Doña Catalina, with whom he held a long conversation.

Relations between the Admiral and the *cacique*, although outwardly cordial, were altogether different from what they had been in the happy days after their first meeting; the man seemed to shrink from all the evidence of Spanish power, and when they proposed to hang a cross round his neck the native king, much as he loved trinkets and toys, expressed a horror and fear of this jewel when he learned that it was an emblem of the Christian faith. He had seen a little too much of the Christian religion; and Heaven only knows with what terror and depression the emblem of the cross inspired him. He went ashore; and when a messenger was sent

to search for him a few days afterwards, it was found that he had moved his whole establishment into the interior of the island. The beautiful native woman Catalina escaped to shore and disappeared at the same time; and the two events were connected in the minds of some of the Spaniards, and held, wrongly as it turned out, to be significant of a deep plot of native treachery.

The most urgent need was to build the new settlement and lay out a town. Several small parties were sent out to reconnoitre the coast in both directions, but none of them found a suitable place; and on December 7th the whole fleet sailed to the east in the hope of finding a better position. They were driven by adverse winds into a harbour some thirty miles to the east of Monte Christi, and when they went ashore they decided that this was as good a site as any for the new town. There was about a quarter of a mile of level sandy beach enclosed by headlands on either side; there was any amount of rock and stones for building, and there was a natural barrier of hills and mountains a mile or so inland that would protect a camp from that side. The soil was very fertile, the vegetation luxuriant; and the mango swamps a little way inland drained into a basin or lake which provided an unlimited water supply. Columbus therefore set about establishing a little town, to which he gave the name of Isabella. Streets and squares were laid out, and rows of temporary buildings made of wood

and thatched with grass were hastily run up for the accommodation of the members of the expedition, while the foundations of three stone buildings were also marked out and the excavations put in hand. These buildings were the church, the storehouse, and a residence for Columbus as Governor-General.

The stores were landed, the horses and cattle accommodated ashore, the provisions, ammunition, and agricultural implements also. Labourers were set to digging out the foundations of the stone buildings, carpenters to cutting down trees and running up the light wooden houses that were to serve as barracks for the present; masons were employed in hewing stones and building landing-piers; and all the crowd of well-born adventurers were set to work with their hands, much to their disgust. This was by no means the life they had imagined, and at the first sign of hard work they turned sulky and discontented. There was, to be sure, some reason for their discontent. Things had not quite turned out as Columbus had promised they should; there was no store of gold, nor any sign of great desire on the part of the natives to bring any; and to add to their other troubles, illness began to break out in the camp. The freshly-turned rank soil had a bad effect on the health of the garrison; the lake, which had promised to be so pleasant a feature in the new town, gave off dangerous malarial vapours at night; and among the sufferers from this trouble was Columbus himself, who endured for some weeks all the pains and lassitude of the disagreeable fever.

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Courses plotted from Sir Clements Markham's "Christopher Columbus."

The ships were now empty and ready for the return voyage, and as soon as Columbus was better he set to work to face the situation. After all his promises it would never do to send them home empty or in ballast; a cargo of stones from the new-found Indies would not be well received in Spain. The natives had told him that somewhere in the island existed the gold mines of Cibao, and he determined to make an attempt to find these, so that he could send his ships home laden with a cargo that would be some indemnity for the heavy cost of the expedition and some compensation for the bad news he must write with regard to his first settlement. Young Ojeda was chosen to lead an expedition of fifteen picked men into the interior; and as the gold mines were said to be in a part of the island not under the command of Guacanagari, but in the territory of the dreaded Caonabo, there was no little anxiety felt about the expedition.

Ojeda started in the beginning of January 1494, and marched southwards through dense forests until, having crossed a mountain range, he came down into a beautiful and fertile valley, where they were hospitably received by the natives. They saw plenty of gold in the sand of the river that watered the valley, which sand the natives had a way of washing so that the gold was separated from it; and there seemed to be so much wealth there that Ojeda hurried back to the new city

of Isabella to make his report to Columbus. The effect upon the discontented colonists was remarkable. Once more everything was right; wealth beyond the dreams of avarice was at their hand; and all they had to do was to stretch out their arms and take it. Columbus felt that he need no longer delay the despatch of twelve of his ships on the homeward voyage. If he had not got golden cargoes for them, at any rate he had got the next best thing, which was the certainty of gold; and it did not matter whether it was in the ships or in his storehouse. He had news to send home at any rate, and a great variety of things to ask for in return, and he therefore set about writing his report to the Sovereigns. Other people, as we know, were writing letters too; the reiterated promise of gold, and the marvellous anecdotes which these credulous settlers readily believed from the natives, such as that there was a rock close by out of which gold would burst if you struck it with a club, raised greed and expectation in Spain to a fever pitch, and prepared the reaction which followed.

We may now read the account of the New World as Columbus sent it home to the King and Queen of Spain in the end of January 1494, and as they read it some weeks later. Their comments, written in the margin of the original, are printed in italics at the end of each paragraph. It was drawn up in the form of a memorandum, and entrusted to Antonio de Torres, who was commanding the return expedition.

"What you, Antonio de Torres, captain of the ship *Marigalante* and Alcalde of the City of Isabella, are to say and supplicate on my part to the King and Queen, our Lords, is as follows:—

"First. Having delivered the letters of credence which you carry from me for their Highnesses, you will kiss for me their Royal feet and hands and will recommend me to their Highnesses as to a King and Queen, my natural Lords, in whose service I desire to end my days: as you will be able to say this more fully to their Highnesses, according to what you have seen and known of me.

["*Their Highnesses hold him in their favour.*]

"Item. Although by the letters I write to their Highnesses, and also the father Friar Buïl and the Treasurer, they will be able to understand all that has been done here since our arrival, and this very minutely and extensively: nevertheless, you will say to their Highnesses on my part, that it has pleased God to give me such favour in their service, that up to the present time I do not find less, nor has less been found in anything than what I wrote and said and affirmed to their Highnesses in the past: but rather, by the Grace of God, I hope that it will appear by works much more clearly and very soon, because such signs and indications of spices have been found on the shores of the sea alone, without having gone inland, that there is reason that very much better results may be hoped for: and this also may be hoped for in the mines of gold, because by two persons only who went to investigate, each one on his own part,

without remaining there because there was not many people, so many rivers have been discovered so filled with gold, that all who saw it and gathered specimens of it with the hands alone, came away so pleased and say such things in regard to its abundance, that I am timid about telling it and writing it to their Highnesses: but because Gorbalan, who was one of the discoverers, is going yonder, he will tell what he saw, although another named Hojeda remains here, a servant of the Duke of Medinaceli, a very discreet youth and very prudent, who without doubt and without comparison even, discovered much more according to the memorandum which he brought of the rivers, saying that there is an incredible quantity in each one of them: for this their Highnesses may give thanks to God, since He has been so favourable to them in all their affairs.

[" *Their Highnesses give many thanks to God for this, and consider as a very signal service all that the Admiral has done in this matter and is doing: because they know that after God they are indebted to him for all they have had, and will have in this affair: and as they are writing him more fully about this, they refer him to their letter.*]

" Item. You will say to their Highnesses, although I already have written it to them, that I desired greatly to be able to send them a larger quantity of gold in this fleet, from that which it is hoped may be gathered here, but the greater part of our people who are here, have fallen suddenly ill: besides, this fleet cannot remain here longer, both on account of the great expense it occasions and because this time is suitable for those persons who are to bring the things which are greatly needed here, to go and be able to return: as, if they delay going away

from here, those who are to return will not be able to do so by May: and besides this, if I wished to undertake to go to the mines or rivers now, with the well people who are here, both on the sea and in the settlement on land, I would have many difficulties and even dangers, because in order to go twenty-three or twenty-four leagues from here where there are harbours and rivers to cross, and in order to cover such a long route and reach there at the time which would be necessary to gather the gold, a large quantity of provisions would have to be carried, which cannot be carried on the shoulders, nor are there beasts of burden here which could be used for this purpose: nor are the roads and passes sufficiently prepared, although I have commenced to get them in readiness so as to be passable: and also it was very inconvenient to leave the sick here in an open place, in huts, with the provisions and supplies which are on land: for although these Indians may have shown themselves to the discoverers and show themselves every day, to be very simple and not malicious: nevertheless, as they come here among us each day, it did not appear that it would be a good idea to risk losing these people and the supplies. This loss an Indian with a piece of burning wood would be able to cause by setting fire to the huts, because they are always going and coming by night and by day: on their account, we have guards in the camp, while the settlement is open and defenceless.

[" *That he did well.*]

" Moreover, as we have seen among those who went by land to make discoveries that the greater part fell sick after returning, and some of them even were obliged to turn back on the road, it was also reasonable to fear that

the same thing would happen to those who are well, who would now go, and as a consequence they would run the risk of two dangers: the one, that of falling sick yonder, in the same work, where there is no house nor any defence against that *cacique* who is called Caonabó, who is a very bad man according to all accounts, and much more audacious and who, seeing us there, sick and in such disorder, would be able to undertake what he would not dare if we were well: and with this difficulty there is another—that of bringing here what gold we might obtain, because we must either bring a small quantity and go and come each day and undergo the risk of sickness, or it must be sent with some part of the people, incurring the same danger of losing it.

[" *He did well.*]

"So that, you will say to their Highnesses, that these are the causes why the fleet has not been at present detained, and why more gold than the specimens has not been sent them: but confiding in the mercy of God, who in everything and for everything has guided us as far as here, these people will quickly become convalescent, as they are already doing, because only certain places in the country suit them and they then recover; and it is certain that if they had some fresh meat in order to convalesce, all with the aid of God would very quickly be on foot, and even the greater part would already be convalescent at this time: nevertheless they will be re-established. With the few healthy ones who remain here, each day work is done toward enclosing the settlement and placing it in a state of some defence and the supplies in safety, which will be accomplished in a short time, because it is to be

only a small dry wall. For the Indians are not a people to undertake anything unless they should find us sleeping, even though they might have thought of it in the manner in which they served the others who remained here. Only on account of their (the Spaniards') lack of caution—they being so few—and the great opportunities they gave the Indians to have and do what they did, they would never have dared to undertake to injure them if they had seen that they were cautious. And this work being finished, I will then undertake to go to the said rivers, either starting upon the road from here and seeking the best possible expedients, or going around the island by sea as far as that place from which it is said it cannot be more than six or seven leagues to the said rivers. In such a manner that the gold can be gathered and placed in security in some fortress or tower which can then be constructed there, in order to keep it securely until the time when the two caravels return here, and in order that then, with the first suitable weather for sailing this course, it may be sent to a place of safety.

[" *That this is well and must be done in this manner.*]

" Item. You will say to their Highnesses, as has been said, that the cause of the general sicknesses common to all is the change of water and air, because we see that it extends to all conditions and few are in danger: consequently, for the preservation of health, after God, it is necessary that these people be provided with the provisions to which they are accustomed in Spain, because neither they, nor others who may come anew, will be able to serve their Highnesses if they are not well: and this provision must continue until a supply is accumulated here from

what shall be sowed and planted here. I say wheat and barley, and vines, of which little has been done this year: because a site for the town could not be selected before, and then when it was selected the few labourers who were here became sick, and they, even though they had been well, had so few and such lean and meagre beasts of burden, that they were able to do but little: nevertheless, they have sown something, more in order to try the soil which appears very wonderful, so that from it some relief may be hoped in our necessities. We are very sure, as the result makes it apparent to us, that in this country wheat as well as the vine will grow very well: but the fruit must be waited for, which, if it corresponds to the quickness with which the wheat grows and of some few vine-shoots which were planted, certainly will not cause regret here for the productions of Andalusia or Sicily: neither is it different with the sugar-canes according to the manner in which some few that were planted have grown. For it is certain that the sight of the land of these islands, as well of the mountains and sierras and waters as of the plains where there are rich rivers, is so beautiful, that no other land on which the sun shines can appear better or as beautiful.

[*"Since the land is such, it must be managed that the greatest possible quantity of all things shall be sown, and Don Juan de Fonseca is to be written to send continually all that is necessary for this purpose.*]

"Item. You will say that, inasmuch as much of the wine which the fleet brought was wasted on this journey, and this, according to what the greater number say, was because of the bad workmanship which the coopers did in

Seville, the greatest necessity we feel here at the present time is for wines, and it is what we desire most to have: and although we may have biscuit as well as wheat sufficient for a longer time, nevertheless it is necessary that a reasonable quantity should also be sent, because the journey is long and provision cannot be made each day: and in the same manner some salted meat, I say bacon, and other salt meat better than that we brought on this journey. It is necessary that each time a caravel comes here, fresh meat shall be sent, and even more than that, lambs and little ewe lambs, more females than males, and some little yearling calves, male and female, and some he-asses and she-asses and some mares for labour and breeding, as there are none of these animals here of any value or which can be made use of by man. And because I apprehend that their Highnesses may not be in Seville, and that the officials or ministers will not provide these things without their express order, and as it is necessary they should come at the first opportunity, and as in consultation and reply the time for the departure of the vessels—which must be here during all of May—will be past: you will say to their Highnesses that I charged and commanded you to pledge the gold you are carrying yonder and place it in possession of some merchant in Seville, who will furnish therefor the necessary maravedis to load two caravels with wine and wheat and the other things of which you are taking a memorandum; which merchant will carry or send the said gold to their Highnesses that they may see it and receive it, and cause what shall have been expended for fitting out and loading of the said two caravels to be paid: and in order to comfort and strengthen these people remaining here, the utmost efforts

must be made for the return of these caravels for all the month of May, that the people before commencing the summer may see and have some refreshment from these things, especially the invalids: the things of which we are already in great need here are such as raisins, sugar, almonds, honey and rice, which should have been sent in large quantities and very little was sent, and that which came is already used and consumed, and even the greater part of the medicines which were brought from there, on account of the multitude of sick people. You are carrying memoranda signed by my hand, as has been said, of things for the people in good health as well as for the sick. You will provide these things fully if the money is sufficient, or at least the things which it is most necessary to send at once, in order that the said two vessels can bring them, and you can arrange with their Highnesses, to have the remaining things sent by other vessels as quickly as possible.

[" *Their Highnesses sent an order to Don Juan de Fonseca to obtain at once information about the persons who committed the fraud of the casks, and to cause all the damage to the wine to be recovered from them, with the costs: and he must see that the canes which are sent are of good quality, and that the other things mentioned here are provided at once.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses that as there is no language here by means of which these people can be made to understand our Holy Faith, as your Highnesses and also we who are here desire, although we will do all we can towards it—I am sending some of the cannibals in the vessels, men and women and male and female children, whom their Highnesses can order

placed with persons from whom they can better learn the language, making use of them in service, and ordering that little by little more pains be taken with them than with other slaves, that they may learn one from the other: if they do not see or speak with each other until some time has passed, they will learn more quickly there than here, and will be better interpreters—although we will not cease to do as much as possible here. It is true that as there is little intercourse between these people from one island to another, there is some difference in their language, according to how far distant they are from each other. And as, of the other islands, those of the cannibals are very large and very well populated, it would appear best to take some of their men and women and send them yonder to Castile, because by taking them away, it may cause them to abandon at once that inhuman custom which they have of eating men: and by learning the language there in Castile, they will receive baptism much more quickly, and provide for the safety of their souls. Even among the peoples who are not cannibals we shall gain great credit, by their seeing that we can seize and take captive those from whom they are accustomed to receive injuries, and of whom they are in such terror that they are frightened by one man alone. You will certify to their Highnesses that the arrival here and sight of such a fine fleet all together has inspired very great authority here and assured very great security for future things: because all the people on this great island and in the other islands, seeing the good treatment which those who well behave receive, and the bad treatment given to those who behave ill, will very quickly render obedience, so that they can be considered as vassals

of their Highnesses. And as now they not only do willingly whatever is required of them by our people, but further, they voluntarily undertake everything which they understand may please us, their Highnesses may also be certain that in many respects, as much for the present as for the future, the coming of this fleet has given them a great reputation, and not less yonder among the Christian princes: which their Highnesses will be better able to consider and understand than I can tell them.

[" *That he is to be told what has befallen the cannibals who came here. That it is very well and must be done in this manner, but that he must try there as much as possible to bring them to our Holy Catholic faith and do the same with the inhabitants of the islands where he is.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses that the safety of the souls of the said cannibals, and further of those here, has inspired the thought that the more there are taken yonder, the better it will be, and their Highnesses can be served by it in this manner: having seen how necessary the flocks and beasts of burden are here, for the sustenance of the people who must be here, and even of all these islands, their Highnesses can give licence and permission to a sufficient number of caravels to come here each year, and bring the said flocks and other supplies and things to settle the country and make use of the land: and this at reasonable prices at the expense of those who bring them: and these things can be paid for in slaves from among these cannibals, a very proud and comely people, well proportioned and of good intelligence, who having been freed from that inhumanity, we believe will

be better than any other slaves. They will be freed from this cruelty as soon as they are outside their country, and many of them can be taken with the row-boats which it is known how to build here: it being understood, however, that a trustworthy person shall be placed on each one of the caravels coming here, who shall forbid the said caravels to stop at any other place or island than this place, where the loading and unloading of all the merchandise must be done. And further, their Highnesses will be able to establish their rights over these slaves which are taken from here yonder to Spain. And you will bring or send a reply to this, in order that the necessary preparations may be made here with more confidence if it appears well to their Highnesses.

[" *This project must be held in abeyance for the present until another method is suggested from there, and the Admiral may write what he thinks in regard to it.*]

"Item. Also you will say to their Highnesses that it is more profitable and costs less to hire the vessels as the merchants hire them for Flanders, by tons, rather than in any other manner: therefore I charged you to hire the two caravels which you are to send here, in this manner: and all the others which their Highnesses send here can be hired thus, if they consider it for their service: but I do not intend to say this of those vessels which are to come here with their licence, for the slave trade.

[" *Their Highnesses order Don Juan de Fonseca to hire the caravels in this manner if it can be done.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses, that to avoid any further cost, I bought these caravels of which

you are taking a memorandum in order to retain them here with these two ships: that is to say the *Gallega* and that other, the *Capitana*, of which I likewise purchased the three-eighths from the master of it, for the price given in the said memorandum which you are taking, signed by my hand. These ships not only will give authority and great security to the people who are obliged to remain inland and make arrangements with the Indians to gather the gold, but they will also be of service in any other dangerous matter which may arise with a strange people; besides the caravels are necessary for the discovery of the mainland and the other islands which lie between here and there: and you will entreat their Highnesses to order the maravedis which these ships cost, paid at the times which they have been promised, because without doubt they will soon receive what they cost, according to what I believe and hope in the mercy of God.

[" *The Admiral has done well, and to tell him that the sum has been paid here to the one who sold the ship, and Don Juan de Fonseca has been ordered to pay for the two caravels which the Admiral bought.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses, and will supplicate on my part as humbly as possible, that it may please them to reflect on what they will learn most fully from the letters and other writings in regard to the peace and tranquillity and concord of those who are here: and that for the service of their Highnesses such persons may be selected as shall not be suspected, and who will give more attention to the matters for which they are sent than to their own interests: and since you

saw and knew everything in regard to this matter, you will speak and will tell their Highnesses the truth about all the things as you understood them, and you will endeavour that the provision which their Highnesses make in regard to it shall come with the first ships if possible, in order that there may be no scandals here in a matter of so much importance in the service of their Highnesses.

[" *Their Highnesses are well informed in regard to this matter, and suitable provision will be made for everything.*]

"Item. You will tell their Highnesses of the situation of this city, and the beauty of the surrounding province as you saw and understood it, and how I made you its Alcade, by the powers which I have for same from their Highnesses: whom I humbly entreat to hold the said provision in part satisfaction of your services, as I hope from their Highnesses.

["*It pleases their Highnesses that you shall be Alcade.*]

"Item. Because Mosen Pedro Màrgarite, servant of their Highnesses, has done good service, and I hope he will do the same henceforward in matters which are intrusted to him, I have been pleased to have him remain here, and also Gaspar and Beltran, because they are recognised servants of their Highnesses, in order to intrust them with matters of confidence. You will specially entreat their Highnesses in regard to the said Mosen Pedro, who is married and has children, to provide him with some charge in the order of Santiago, whose habit he wears, that his wife and children may have the wherewith to live. In the same manner you will relate how

well and diligently Juan Aguado, servant of their Highnesses, has rendered service in everything which he has been ordered to do, and that I supplicate their Highnesses to have him and the aforesaid persons in their charge and to reward them.

[" *Their Highnesses order* 30,000 *maravedis to be assigned to Mosen Pedro each year, and to Gaspar and Beltran, to each one,* 15,000 *maravedis each year, from the present, August* 15, 1494, *henceforward: and thus the Admiral shall cause to be paid to them whatever must be paid yonder in the Indies, and Don Juan de Fonseca whatever must be paid here: and in regard to Juan Aguado, their Highnesses will hold him in remembrance.*]

"Item. You will tell their Highnesses of the labour performed by Dr. Chanca, confronted with so many invalids, and still more because of the lack of provisions: and nevertheless, he acts with great diligence and charity in everything pertaining to his office. And as their Highnesses referred to me the salary which he was to receive here, because, being here, it is certain that he cannot take or receive anything from any one, nor earn money by his office as he earned it in Castile, or would be able to earn it being at his ease and living in a different manner from the way he lives here; therefore, notwithstanding he swears that he earned more there, besides the salary which their Highnesses gave him, I did not wish to allow more than 50,000 maravedis each year for the work he performs here while he remains here. This I entreat their Highnesses to order allowed to him with the salary from here, and that, because he says and affirms that all the physicians of their Highnesses who are employed in Royal affairs or things similar to this,

are accustomed to have by right one day's wages in all the year from all the people. Nevertheless, I have been informed and they tell me, that however this may be, the custom is to give them a certain sum, fixed according to the will and command of their Highnesses in compensation for that day's wages. You will entreat their Highnesses to order provision made as well in the matter of the salary as of this custom, in such manner that the said Dr. Chanca may have reason to be satisfied.

[" *Their Highnesses are pleased in regard to this matter of Dr. Chanca, and that he shall be paid what the Admiral has assigned him, together with his salary.*

" *In regard to the day's wages of the physicians, they are not accustomed to receive it, save where the King, our Lord, may be in person.*]

" Item. You will say to their Highnesses that Coronel is a man for the service of their Highnesses in many things, and how much service he has rendered up to the present in all the most necessary matters, and the need we feel of him now that he is sick; and that rendering service in such a manner, it is reasonable that he should receive the fruit of his service, not only in future favours, but in his present salary, so that he and those who are here may feel that their service profits them; because, so great is the labour which must be performed here in gathering the gold that the persons who are so diligent are not to be held in small consideration; and as, for his skill, he was provided here by me with the office of Alguacil Mayor of these Indies; and since in the provision the salary is left blank, you will say that I supplicate their Highnesses to order it filled in with as large an amount as they may

think right, considering his services, confirming to him the provision I have given him here, and assuring it to him annually.

[" *Their Highnesses order that* 15,000 *maravedis more than his salary shall be assigned him each year, and that it shall be paid to him with his salary.*]

"In the same manner you will tell their Highnesses how the lawyer Gil Garcia came here for Alcalde Mayor and no salary has been named or assigned to him; and he is a capable person, well educated and diligent, and is very necessary here; that I entreat their Highnesses to order his salary named and assigned, so that he can sustain himself, and that it may be paid from the money allowed for salaries here.

"[*Their Highnesses order* 20,000 *maravedis besides his salary assigned to him each year, as long as he remains yonder, and that it shall be paid him when his salary is paid.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses, although it is already written in the letters, that I do not think it will be possible to go to make discoveries this year, until these rivers in which gold is found are placed in the most suitable condition for the service of their Highnesses, as afterwards it can be done much better. Because it is a thing which no one can do without my presence, according to my will or for the service of their Highnesses, however well it may be done, as it is doubtful what will be satisfactory to a man unless he is present.

[" *Let him endeavour that the amount of this gold may be known as precisely as possible.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses that the Squires who came from Granada showed good horses in the review which took place at Seville, and afterward at the embarkation I did not see them because I was slightly unwell, and they replaced them with such horses that the best of them do not appear to be worth 2000 maravedis, as they sold the others and bought these; and this was done in the same way to many people as I very well saw yonder, in the reviews at Seville. It appears that Juan de Soria, after he had been given the money for the wages, for some interest of his own substituted others in place of those I expected to find here, and I found people whom I had never seen. In this matter he was guilty of great wickedness, so that I do not know if I should complain of him alone. On this account, having seen that the expenses of these Squires have been defrayed until now, besides their wages and also wages for their horses, and it is now being done: and they are persons who, when they are sick or when they do not desire to do so, will not allow any use to be made of their horses save by themselves: and their Highnesses do not desire that these horses should be purchased of them, but that they should be used in the service of their Highnesses: and it does not appear to them that they should do anything or render any service except on horseback, which at the present time is not much to the purpose: on this account, it seems that it would be better to buy the horses from them, since they are of so little value, and not have these disagreements with them every day. Therefore their Highnesses may determine this as will best serve them.

["*Their Highnesses order Don Juan de Fonseca to inform himself in regard to this matter of the horses, and if it shall be*

found true that this fraud was committed, those persons shall be sent to their Highnesses to be punished: and also he is to inform himself in regard to what is said of the other people, and send the result in the examination to their Highnesses; and in regard to these Squires, their Highnesses command that they remain there and render service, since they belong to the guards and servants of their Highnesses: and their Highnesses order the Squires to give up the horses each time it is necessary and the Admiral orders it, and if the horses receive any injury through others using them, their Highnesses order that the damage shall be paid to them by means of the Admiral.]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses that more than 200 persons have come here without wages, and there are some of them who render good service. And as it is ordered that the others rendering similar service should be paid: and as for these first three years it would be of great benefit to have 1000 men here to settle, and place this island and the rivers of gold in very great security, and even though there were 100 horsemen nothing would be lost, but rather it seems necessary, although their Highnesses will be able to do without these horsemen until gold is sent: nevertheless, their Highnesses must send to say whether wages shall be paid to these 200 persons, the same as to the others rendering good service, because they are certainly necessary, as I have said in the beginning of this memorandum.

["*In regard to these* 200 *persons, who are here said to have gone without wages, their Highnesses order that they shall take the places of those who went for wages, who have failed or shall fail to fulfil their engagements, if they are skilful and satisfactory to the Admiral. And their Highnesses order the*

Purser (Contador) to enrol them in place of those who fail to fulfil their engagements, as the Admiral shall instruct him.]

"Item. As the cost of these people can be in some degree lightened and the better part of the expense could be avoided by the same means employed by other Princes in other places: it appears that it would be well to order brought in the ships, besides the other things which are for the common maintenance and the medicines, shoes and the skins from which to order the shoes made, common shirts and others, jackets, linen, sack-coats, trowsers and cloths suitable for wearing apparel, at reasonable prices: and other things like conserves which are not included in rations and are for the preservation of health, which things all the people here would willingly receive to apply on their wages: and if these were purchased yonder in Spain by faithful Ministers who would act for the advantage of their Highnesses, something would be saved. Therefore you will learn the will of their Highnesses about this matter, and if it appears to them to be of benefit to them, then it must be placed in operation.

[" *This arrangement is to be in abeyance until the Admiral writes more fully, and at another time they will send to order Don Juan de Fonseca with Jimeno de Bribiesca to make provision for the same.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses that inasmuch as yesterday in the review people were found who were without arms, which I think happened in part by that exchange which took place yonder in Seville, or in the harbour when those who presented themselves armed were left, and others were taken who gave something to those

who made the exchange, it seems that it would be well to order 200 cuirasses sent, and 100 muskets and 100 cross-bows, and a large quantity of arsenal supplies, which is what we need most, and all these arms can be given to those who are unarmed.

[" *Already Don Juan de Fonseca has been written to make provision for this.*]

" Item. Inasmuch as some artisans who came here, such as masons and other workmen, are married and have wives yonder in Spain, and would like to have what is owing them from their wages given to their wives or to the persons to whom they will send their requirements in order that they may buy for them the things which they need here: I supplicate their Highnesses to order it paid to them, because it is for their benefit to have these persons provided for here.

[" *Their Highnesses have already sent orders to Don Juan de Fonseca to make provision for this matter.*]

" Item. Because, besides the other things which are asked for there according to the memoranda which you are carrying signed by my hand, for the maintenance of the persons in good health as well as for the sick ones, it would be very well to have fifty casks of molasses (miel de azucar) from the island of Madeira, as it is the best sustenance in the world and the most healthful, and it does not usually cost more than two ducats per cask, without the cask: and if their Highnesses order some caravel to stop there in returning, it can be purchased and also ten cases of sugar, which is very necessary; as this is the best season of the year to obtain it, I say between the present time

and the month of April, and to obtain it at a reasonable price. If their Highnesses command it, the order could be given, and it would not be known there for what place it is wanted.

[" *Let Don Juan de Fonseca make provision for this matter.*]

"Item. You will say to their Highnesses that although the rivers contain gold in the quantity related by those who have seen it, yet it is certain that the gold is not engendered in the rivers but rather on the land, the waters of the rivers which flow by the mines bringing it enveloped in the sands: and as among these rivers which have been discovered there are some very large ones, there are others so small that they are fountains rather than rivers, which are not more than two fingers of water in depth, and then the source from which they spring may be found: for this reason not only labourers to gather it in the sand will be profitable, but others to dig for it in the earth, which will be the most particular operation and produce a great quantity. And for this, it will be well for their Highnesses to send labourers, and from among those who work yonder in Spain in the mines of Almaden, that the work may be done in both ways. Although we will not await them here, as with the labourers we have here we hope, with the aid of God, once the people are in good health, to amass a good quantity of gold to be sent on the first caravels which return.

[" *This will be fully provided for in another manner. In the meantime their Highnesses order Don Juan de Fonseca to send the best miners he can obtain; and to write to Almaden to have the greatest possible number taken from there and sent.*]

"Item. You will entreat their Highnesses very humbly on my part, to consider Villacorta as speedily recommended to them, who, as their Highnesses know, has rendered great service in this business, and with a very good will, and as I know him, he is a diligent person and very devoted to their service: it will be a favour to me if he is given some confidential charge for which he is fitted, and where he can show his desire to serve them and his diligence: and this you will obtain in such a way that Villacorta may know by the result, that what he has done for me when I needed him profits him in this manner.

["*It will be done thus.*]

"Item. That the said Mosen Pedro and Gaspar and Beltran and others who have remained here gave up the captainship of caravels, which have now returned, and are not receiving wages: but because they are persons who must be employed in important matters and of confidence, their compensation, which must be different from the others, has not been determined. You will entreat their Highnesses on my part to determine what is to be given them each year, or by the month, according to their service.

"Done in the city of Isabella, January 30, 1494.

["*This has already been replied to above, but as it is stated in the said item that they enjoy their salary, from the present time their Highnesses order that their wages shall be paid to all of them from the time they left their captainships.*"]

This document is worth studying, written as it was in circumstances that at one moment looked desperate

and at another were all hope. Columbus was struggling manfully with difficulties that were already beginning to be too much for him. The Man from Genoa, with his guiding star of faith in some shore beyond the mist and radiance of the West—see into what strange places and to what strange occupations this star has led him! The blue visionary eyes, given to seeing things immediately beyond the present horizon, must fix themselves on accounts and requisitions, on the needs of idle, aristocratic, grumbling Spaniards; must fix themselves also on that blank void in the bellies of his returning ships, where the gold ought to have been. The letter has its practical side; the requisitions are made with good sense and a grasp of the economic situation; but they have a deeper significance than that. All this talk about little ewe lambs, wine and bacon (better than the last lot, if it please your Highnesses), little yearling calves, and fifty casks of molasses that can be bought a ducat or two cheaper in Madeira in the months of April and May than at any other time or place, is only half real. Columbus fills his Sovereigns' ears with this clamour so that he shall not hear those embarrassing questions that will inevitably be asked about the gold and the spices. He boldly begins his letter with the old story about "indications of spices" and gold "in incredible quantities," with a great deal of "moreover" and "besides," and a bold, pompous,[1] pathetic "I will undertake"; and then he gets away from that subject by wordy deviations, so that to one reading his letter it really might seem as

though the true business of the expedition was to provide Coronel, Mosen Pedro, Gaspar, Beltran, Gil Garcia, and the rest of them with work and wages. Everything that occurs to him, great or little, that makes it seem as though things were humming in the new settlement, he stuffs into this document, shovelling words into the empty hulls of the ships, and trying to fill those bottomless pits with a stream of talk. A system of slavery is boldly and bluntly sketched; the writer, in the hurry and stress of the moment, giving to its economic advantages rather greater prominence than to its religious glories. The memorandum, for all its courageous attempt to be very cool and orderly and practical, gives us, if ever a human document did, a picture of a man struggling with an impossible situation which he will not squarely face, like one who should try to dig up the sea-shore and keep his eyes shut the while.

In the royal comments written against the document one seems to trace the hand of Isabella rather than of Ferdinand. Their tone is matter-of-fact, cool, and comforting, like the coolness of a woman's hand placed on a feverish brow. Isabella believed in him; perhaps she read between the lines of this document, and saw, as we can see, how much anxiety and distress were written there; and her comments are steadying and encouraging. He has done well; what he asks is being attended to; their Highnesses are well informed in regard to this and that matter; suitable provision will be made for everything; *but let him endeavour that the amount of this gold may be*

known as precisely as possible. There is no escaping from that. The Admiral (no one knows it better than himself) must make good his dazzling promises, and coin every boastful word into a golden *excelente* of Spain. Alas! he must no longer write about the lush grasses, the shining rivers, the brightly coloured parrots, the gaudy flies and insects, the little singing birds, and the nights that are like May in Cordova. He must find out about the gold; for it has come to grim business in the Earthly Paradise.

END OF VOL. I

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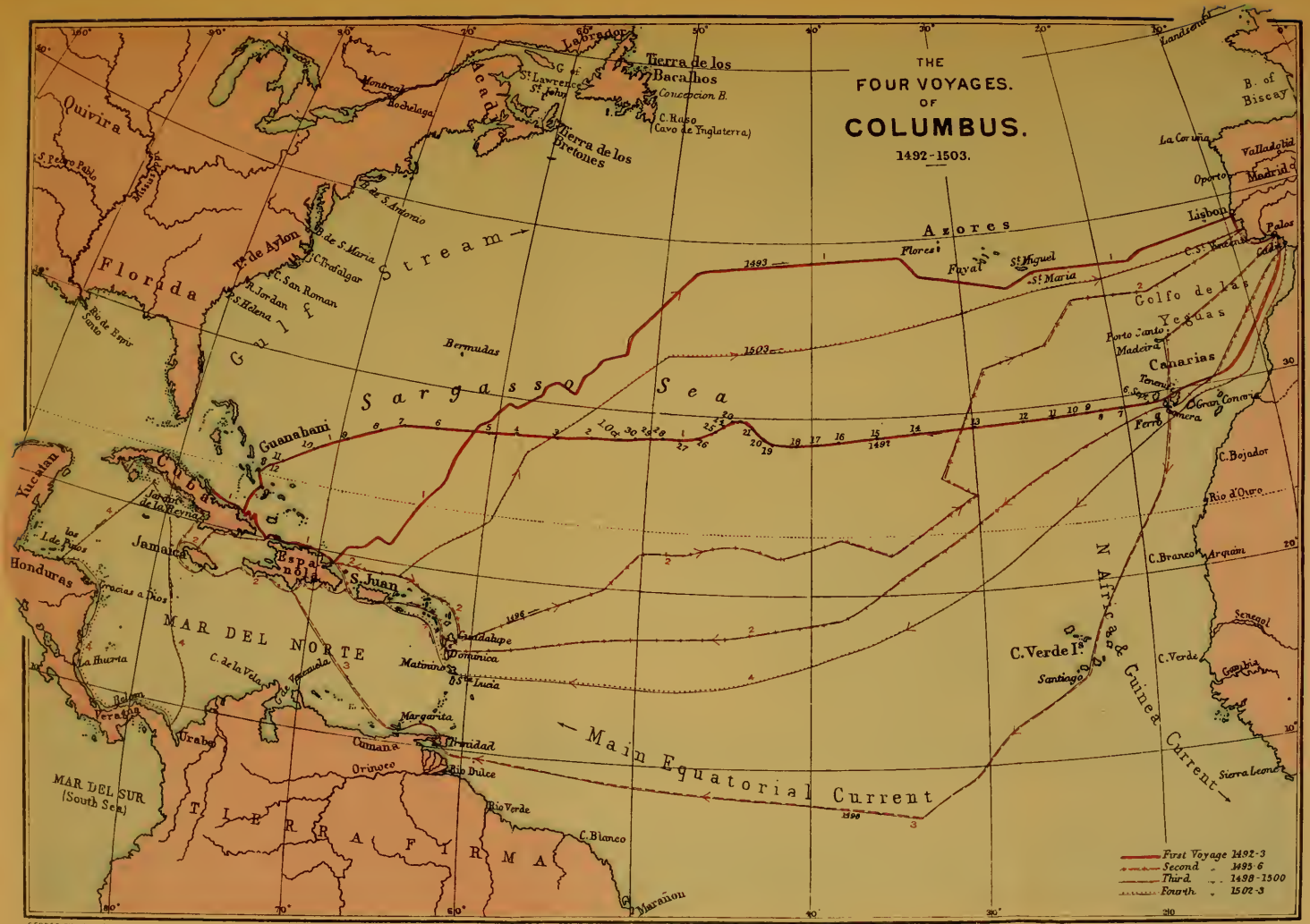

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